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Partisan Warfare in Greece 1941–44

Phoebus Athanassiou • Illustrated by Adam Hook

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Series editors Martin Windrow & Nick Reynolds

PARTISAN WARFARE IN GREECE 1941–44

INTRODUCTION

On 6 April 1941, troops assigned to Germany's 12. Armee (Generalfeldmarschall Wilhelm von List) crossed the Greco-Bulgarian border, invading Greece. The German intervention served a triple objective: to break the bloody stalemate into which the Greek Army (Ellinikós Stratós) had fought Italy's Royal Army (*Regio Esercito*) following Mussolini's ill-fated invasion of Greece (28 October 1940); to secure Germany's south-eastern flank in anticipation of the planned invasion of the Soviet Union; and to secure bases for the Luftwaffe to strike against British forces along the Eastern Mediterranean and in North Africa. Faced with a two-front war, in an area extending from the Adriatic Sea to the Greco-Bulgarian border, the Greek Army and the Allied Expeditionary Corps – mostly consisting of Australian and New Zealand troops hurriedly sent to Greece from the North African front – staged a fighting retreat south before succumbing to the Wehrmacht's inexorable superiority. The Germans had reached Athens by 27 April and the southernmost shores of mainland Greece by 30 April. By the end of May they had also captured Crete, following an intense, 13-day-long struggle involving the large-scale deployment of airborne troops. The fall of Crete signalled the end of Greece's sovereignty and the start of the country's *Katochì* (occupation), a dark period that was to last three long years.

German Flak troops (including a Luftwaffe NCO, scanning the sky with his binoculars) man a 3.7cm anti-aircraft gun in the centre of Athens, against the backdrop of Mount Lycabettus. This photograph was taken in late May 1941, when the Axis forces were still in the process of consolidating their grip on Greece, and when the threat of British air raids was still perceived as real. Owing to the early-morning heat, some of the gun crew have stripped down to the bare essentials. (Author's Collection)

A column of Bulgarian troops crosses into Greece, in April or May 1941, following Germany's invasion and the collapse of the Greek defences. The troops visible here all wear the Bulgarian Army's *bustina*-type forage cap rather than steel helmets, suggesting that they do not expect to encounter resistance as they head south. (Author's Collection)

The Axis Powers divided Greece into three occupation zones. Germany controlled the most strategically important areas; Bulgaria occupied (and annexed) eastern Macedonia, western Thrace and the islands of Thassos and Samothraki; and Italy took over the remainder of the Greek mainland, eastern Crete (Lasithi prefecture), and the south Aegean Sea and Ionian Sea islands. Germany and Italy jointly occupied Athens and the port city of Piraeus. An Allied naval blockade of Greece and the requisition of foodstuffs by the occupation forces were to lead, already in the first winter of occupation, to the Great Famine, which ravaged Athens and other large urban centres. The combination of food shortages, rampant hyperinflation, and high-handedness on the part of the Axis occupiers led to growing public discontent and resentment, especially in the cities, where living conditions were harsher and repression more systematic. The scene was set for resistance. By October 1944, Greece's armed resistance movement had grown into one of the largest in occupied Europe, with well over 100,000 armed *andartes* (partisans), out of a total population of barely 7.5 million.

This book aims to provide as comprehensive an account of partisan warfare in Greece as space constraints will allow, with an emphasis on the forces involved in it, their organization and tactics.

A delegation of senior Wehrmacht officers on a visit to the Acropolis, have their picture taken before the Erechtheion, on 10 May 1941. The Wehrmacht entered Athens – previously declared an open city – on 27 April 1941, initiating a three year-long period of harsh occupation and resistance against the Axis forces. (Author's Collection)

GREECE'S TRADITIONS OF IRREGULAR WARFARE

Modern-day Greece gained its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1829. From a tactical perspective, the Greek War of Independence (1821–29) bore many of the hallmarks of a guerrilla war, pitting lightly armed bands of locally recruited irregulars, often tied by links of blood and kinship to one another and to their chieftains, against a numerically stronger and conventionally organized regular military force. Exploiting the topography and their superior knowledge of the terrain, and deploying ruses, the insurgents harassed Ottoman troops, springing ambushes on them and staging small- and medium-scale actions with the objective of wearing down and, ultimately, defeating their more conventionally organized rivals.

Banditry remained endemic in the Greek countryside for the whole of the 19th century and into the 20th, keeping alive the flame of guerrilla warfare (piracy, its seaborne equivalent, had been extinguished soon after the creation of the Kingdom of Greece in 1832). Greece's human geography, with its large, poor and hardy rural population, was a further contributory factor to the endemic banditry phenomenon. Many were those who idealized brigands as bearers of a time-honoured tradition of martial individualism and romanticized resistance to oppression. Socio-economic and historical considerations aside, what contributed to the spread and perseverance of banditry across Greece was the country's difficult topography: its mountainous and rugged terrain, extensive woodlands and poor road network provided ample hiding spaces for outlaws, rendering their detection and neutralization a challenging task.

In 1941, the people of Greece were less indigent and backward in their *mores* than their forefathers, but they had at least three good reasons to be partial towards armed resistance. First, they had access to a repository of weapons and to a modest supply of ammunition that Greek soldiers had secreted following the collapse of their tenacious defence in the Pindus Mountains and along the Macedonian border (in recognition of their valour, the Germans had not interned Greek soldiers, nor had they disarmed their officers). Second, they were emboldened by the precedent of their near-defeat of Fascist Italy, free Europe's first noteworthy land warfare success against the Axis. Third, they could count on an organization with an unparalleled capital of experience in clandestine, conspiratorial activities: the KKE, the patron of EAM-ELAS, Greece's largest and most potent armed resistance movement.

Two unidentified *andartes* pose for the camera. Judging by the costume of the *andartis* on the left and, in particular, by his headdress and legwear, widely worn by the peasants on either side of Greece's northern border, this picture was most likely taken in western Macedonia or Thrace. The *andartis* on the right seems to be armed with the reliable 6.5mm Mannlicher-Schönauer M1903/14 rifle, the standard-issue infantry weapon of the former Royal Greek Army. (Athens War Museum)

BELOW LEFT
Three guerrillas rest during their trek across the mountains of Crete. The island was among the few places in Greece where ELAS was not the dominant resistance force. Of the three guerrillas shown here, one is armed with a 9mm MP 40 submachine gun, while another (the one closest to the camera) appears to carry the less common 9mm MP 41 submachine gun, both taken, in all likelihood, from slain Axis soldiers. (Athens War Museum)

BELOW RIGHT
A proud, middle-aged Cretan guerrilla poses for the camera in this undated studio portrait. The MP 40 submachine gun displayed here would most certainly have been taken from a dead German soldier, possibly one of the several thousand parachutists who perished during the 13 days of fighting for the capture of Crete in May 1941. Cretans have traditionally enjoyed a reputation for belligerence and displayed a strong interest in weapons, which would stand them in good stead during World War II. (Athens War Museum)

RESISTANCE IN GREECE

The struggle between the two extremes of the national armed resistance movement was one of the defining features of partisan warfare in Greece. At one end stood ELAS, the military arm of EAM, a KKE-dominated loose coalition of pre-war left-wing political parties, all but uprooted in the run-up to the Greco-Italian War (1940–41) by the repressive regime of Ioannis Metaxas (August 1936–January 1941). At the opposite end stood EDES, the brainchild of a group of Athens-based Republican-minded political and military figures.

What ELAS and EDES had in common at the time of their formation was their anti-Monarchist agenda (at the start of the National Resistance, all major Greek political parties opposed monarchy, which they considered responsible for the pre-war Metaxas dictatorship). As the National Resistance dragged on, these two guerrilla bands became increasingly radicalized: EDES shed its Republican stance and turned pro-Monarchist, while ELAS became more unabashed about its fundamentally Communist orientation. In the case of EDES, the shift away from its more liberal origins was an act of political expediency, as its main lifeline, Britain, actively sponsored the unpopular King George II of the Hellenes (r. 1922–24; 1935–47) and his Cairo-based government-in-exile, vehemently opposing any attempt to abolish the monarchy. In the case of ELAS, its Communist epiphany was an expression of its true colours, as EAM, its patron, was controlled by the KKE, the only organized political force in the country with an ideological foundation strong enough, and a clandestine network effective enough, to mount a nationwide insurgency against the Axis. The radicalization of the two main agents of the Greek resistance movement laid the ground for an internecine showdown that was to prove every bit as dramatic as the fight against Axis occupation.

CHRONOLOGY

1941

6 April German forces invade Greece via Bulgaria (Operation *Marita*), occupying Athens on 27 April.

20 May–1 June German airborne troops capture Crete (Operation *Merkur*).

16 July KKE establishes EAM.

29 September In reprisals for the Drama uprising, Bulgarian troops execute all 485 male inhabitants of the town of Doxato.

15 October Establishment of EDES.

December Start of the 'Great Famine', costing an estimated 270,000 lives.

1942

April EAM establishes ELAS as its military arm.

23 July Colonel Napoleon Zervas takes to the mountains of north-western Greece (Epirus), in charge of the first nucleus of EDES guerrillas.

30 September Lieutenant-Colonel E.C.W. Myers leads a 12-strong British party into Greece, with orders to enlist the help of guerrilla groups and cut the north–south railway line.

24–25 November Destruction of the Gorgopotamos River railway bridge by 12 British operators and 150 ELAS and EDES *andartes* (Operation *Harling*).

1943

16 February Myers receives instructions to organize and equip the *andartes* throughout Greece, and to prepare sabotage plans (21 February).

23 February EPON, occupied Greece's largest youth resistance organization, is established.

1 March ELAS bands capture Colonel Stéfanos Saráfis and disperse his band; start of the mass deportation of the Jews of Thessaloniki to the Auschwitz death camp.

April–May Ioannis Rallis, the newly appointed head of the puppet government, establishes the first state-sponsored armed collaborationist troops; Colonel Dimitrios Psarros sets up EKKA around Mount Parnassus; Colonel Saráfis assumes the military command of ELAS.

2 May Establishment of the ELAS GHQ, signifying the transformation of ELAS from a rebel force into a regular army.

June Negotiation of the National Bands Agreement between ELAS and EDES; destruction of the Asopos River railway bridge by a six-strong British party (20–21 June).

September Armistice of Cassibile, leading to Italy's exit from World War II (3 September); German forces launch Operation *Achse*, to disarm the Italian armed forces in Greece (8 September); Italy's 24ª Divisione di fanteria 'Pinerolo' and the Reggimento 'Lancieri di Aosta' (6º) go over to ELAS (12 September); German forces disarm Italy's 33ª Divisione di fanteria 'Acqui', stationed on Cephalonia, executing some 5,000 of its personnel (22 September).

October German forces launch Operation *Panther* against guerrilla forces in the Metsovon Pass, Mount Olympos, Mount Parnassus, Ioannina and the Amfissa areas of Greece; German forces capture the island of Kos, taking 2,500 Italian and 600 British soldiers prisoner and executing 96 Italian officers (4 October); ELAS attacks rival bands in Epirus and Thessaly (9–31 October); battle of Vourgarelli (Tzoumerka Mountains) pits EDES forces against elements of the 1. Gebirgs-Division (30–31 October); EDES negotiates 'silent' ceasefire with the XXII. Gebirgskorps (end of October).

16 November The Italian garrison of Leros, and 3,200 British troops, surrender to German forces.

December EDES withdraws to a small area of Epirus, to re-group; the Kalavryta Massacre (13 December) conducted by men of the 117. Jäger-Division results in 693 civilian casualties, including women and children.

1944

February ELAS and EDES agree to a ceasefire (4 February); negotiation and conclusion of the Plaka Armistice between ELAS and EDES (5–29 February).

11 March EAM-ELAS inaugurate the PEEA, without EDES or EKKA participation.

17–20 May Negotiation and conclusion of the Lebanon Agreement, signalling the formation of a National Unity Government and subsuming the PEEA.

6–25 June German forces conduct anti-partisan Operation *Gemsbock* in the border region between German-occupied Albania and north-western Greece.

July EDES re-opens hostilities against German forces around Parga and Arta (3 July); German forces launch Operation *Steinadler* against the ELAS bands around Pentalofos (3 July); the battle of Amfilochia between the ELAS 8th Division and elements of the 104. Jäger-Division (12 July); Oberkommando der Wehrmacht issues Directive 48, centralizing authority for the defence of the Balkans and reorganizing the German forces (26 July); 11-strong Soviet Mission, under Lieutenant-Colonel Grigori M. Popov, arrives in Greece (28 July).

August Two German companies, 2. and 3./SS-Polizei-Panzergrenadier-Regiment 8, launch Operation *Kreuzotter* against the EDES bands in the Mount Parnon area, near Amfissa, Central Greece; battle of Menina (Thesprotia), between EDES and elements of the 1. Gebirgs-Division, supported by Albanian irregulars (17–18 August); Heeresgruppe E orders the start of the evacuation of all German forces from Greece, except for the Crete and Rhodes garrisons (end of August).

September ELAS and EDES attempt to block the retreat of German forces, as part of Operation *Noah's Ark* (10 September); battle of Meligalas (Messinia) pits ELAS forces against collaborationist troops (13–14 September); conclusion of the Caserta Agreement between ELAS, EDES, the Greek government-in-exile and General Sir Henry M. Wilson, Supreme Allied Commander for the Mediterranean, leading to the creation of a united national army (26 September).

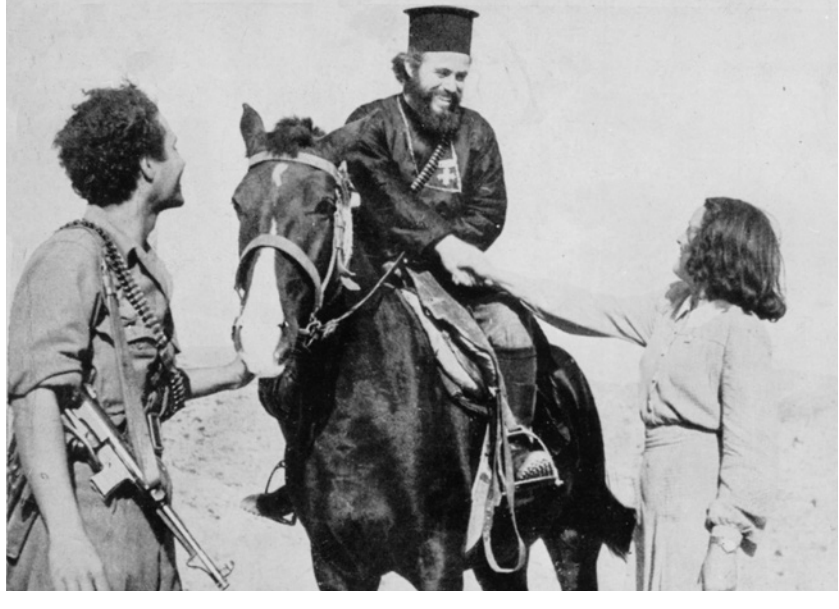
October German forces evacuate Athens (12 October) and Thessaloniki (30 October); Bulgarian forces evacuate Greece (25 October).

November Last of German forces evacuate Greece (2 November); battle of Kilkis, pitting ELAS against collaborationist forces in Northern Greece (3–4 November); the Greek 3rd Rimini Brigade lands in Greece (5 November).

ELAS: THE PAN-HELLENIC RESISTANCE ARMY

Command structure

EAM formally established the symbolically named ELAS (spelled with a double 'L', its name would have matched the Greek word for 'Greece'), its very own guerrilla army, in December 1942. Previously, it had controlled small armed bands, restricted to sporadic, uncoordinated and low-impact attacks. ELAS's General Headquarters (GHQ) only came into being in May 1943. Both ELAS GHQ and the lower commands originally operated under a triangular command structure, consisting of a military commander, a political adviser and a *kapetánios*. The military commander oversaw operations, while the *kapetánios* (his co-equal) was responsible for administration, recruitment, supplies, unit morale and political enlightenment. The overall military commander of ELAS was Colonel Stéfanos Saráfis, a militarily competent, latently anti-British and viscerally anti-Monarchist former Greek Army regular officer who, despite not being a Communist, had been won over to EAM's cause around the time of the establishment of ELAS GHQ (Colonel Dimitrios Psarros, a respected Republican military figure, and leader of the rival EKKA band, had earlier turned down EAM's invitation to take up that post). Until the abolition of the post of political adviser, the latter were the most important members of the ELAS command structure, and they also held ELAS officer rank. Following the abolition of that post in the spring of 1944, former political advisers were redeployed as chiefs-of-staff or other senior position-holders at lower levels of the ELAS command structure. The *Protokapetánios* (arch-captain) of ELAS was Aris Velouchiòtis, the *nom de guerre* of Athanasios Klaras, a ruthless, charismatic and organizationally adept veteran Communist, imprisoned, pre-war, for his political convictions, but also for criminal acts. Because only KKE cadres were eligible for the post of *kapetánios*, they eventually took over the political



An Orthodox priest on horseback heartily shakes the hand of a civilian, under the watchful eye of a smiling *andartis*, armed with a captured MP 40 submachine gun. The priest is himself a guerrilla, judging by his (pistol?) ammunition belt, hobnailed jackboots and the military greatcoat folded over the neck of his mount. Orthodox priests were present in all guerrilla bands, including ELAS (to which the priest portrayed here is most likely attached), officiating over ceremonies, preaching sermons, blessing the weapons of the guerrillas and even fighting alongside them. (Athens War Museum)

Colonel Saráfis, flanked by two members of his staff and shadowed by three youthful bodyguards. The smiling staff officers most likely bear the rank of *tagmatàrchis* (major), judging by the single, six-pointed metal star pinned on their former Greek Army tunics' shoulder straps, and on the side of their forage caps. The bodyguards are armed with .45 Thompson submachine guns, a status symbol among guerrillas and a suitable weapon for the security detail of none other than the ELAS military commander himself. Note that no two of the ELAS fighters shown here wear the same badge on their forage caps. (Athens War Museum)

advisers' role. In 1944 *kapetánioi* were granted reserve-officer status. At the apex of ELAS's strength, some 1,000 *kapetánioi* (symbolically named after the chieftains who led irregular bands during Greece's War of Independence) made up a sizeable share of the total ELAS officer corps.

Organization and recruitment

The creation of ELAS GHQ and the appointment of Saráfis as supreme military commander signalled ELAS's gradual reorganization into a regular army. In June 1943, ELAS GHQ controlled some 4,500 men in Macedonia, about 4,000 in Thessaly, 3,000 in Roumeli (central Greece) and roughly 500 in Epirus (the stronghold of ELAS's arch-rival, EDES). These regional forces were originally organized into *Archigeia* ('Headquarters') or *Genikes Dioikìseis* ('General Commands'), sub-divided into commands and sub-commands, respectively. In July 1943, ELAS GHQ reshuffled its organizational structure, giving regular army designations to all units with effect from 1 September 1943: headquarters and general commands became divisions, commands became regiments and subcommands battalions, with each of them divided into companies, platoons and sections. In truth, the strength of the ELAS divisions barely reached 4,000 men (or one-third of the conventional establishment of a division), with battalions composed of no more than 400 men. ELAS *andartes* spent most of their time in smaller units, dispersed across the countryside, and only assembled as full-strength units for larger-scale tactical operations.

To approximate the organizational structure of a regular military force, and to attain the discipline levels of a conventional army, ELAS instituted, as of mid-1943, military regulations: saluting became mandatory, and disciplinary measures (which included the death penalty for particularly egregious offences) were rigorously enforced, either locally (in urgent cases) or following the approval of the higher command. In 1944, regular courts-martial were established at divisional level. As with the members of any regular army, the men and women of ELAS were expected to swear an oath of allegiance and they became, as of the summer of 1943, eligible for moral awards and distinctions, as well as for promotion (including to reserve-officer status).

Members of the ELAS Thessaly Division pose for the camera in an assortment of uniforms. The weapons visible here are a .45 Thompson M1921 submachine gun with a barrel compensator and a drum-shaped magazine, as well as a .303 Bren light machine gun. Standing first and second from the right are Alvertos Amon and Pepos Kohen, both of the Jewish Community of the city of Volos. (© Photographic Archive – Jewish Museum of Greece)

ELAS rank-and-file guerrillas did not bear rank insignia; later in the war, most of its officers followed a rank designation system broadly inspired by that of the pre-war regular Greek Army. They also wore uniform items that denoted their hierarchically superior status, such as Sam Browne-style belts and knee-high riding boots and carried binocular or map-cases, daggers and whips. Despite its political leanings, ELAS did not fly banners featuring Communist symbols, unlike their counterparts in Yugoslavia and elsewhere in the Balkans: ELAS units only allowed the carrying of Greek national flags and the display of locally made devices and emblems on their uniforms, reminiscent in their choice of colours and overall composition, of pre-war national devices and emblems, ostensibly in a show of non-partisan patriotism, but, also, in a bid to put some distance between them and the KKE's Communist ideology.

ELAS recruited its rank and file from areas of the Greek countryside under its control. Given that ELAS held sway over large swathes of rural Greece, its recruitment base was substantial. Although ELAS did recruit some of its men forcibly, most were volunteers, with the number of fresh recruits joining its ranks increasing as the prospect of Germany's defeat loomed larger. From a strength of fewer than 5,000 men in the spring of 1943, ELAS boasted close to 20,000 men by the autumn of the same

A troop of the ELAS Cavalry Brigade charges forward, most likely in Thessaly. This photograph was probably taken in the aftermath of Italy's surrender to the Allies in September 1943, which saw ELAS inherit most of the mounts and equipment of the Reggimento 'Lancieri di Aosta' (6°). The ELAS cavalrymen shown here appear to carry Italian 6.5mm Mannlicher-Carcano M1891 cavalry carbines, and their overall appearance is surprisingly uniform for a guerrilla army. (Unknown/ Wikimedia/Public Domain)

ELAS cadres review a parading troop, in a photograph taken between mid-1943 and late 1944. Despite its humble beginnings, ELAS developed into the most disciplined of all Greek guerrilla bands, and by the time of the conclusion of the National Resistance, it had come close to observing regular Army organizational standards. (Athens War Museum)

year; the estimates of Colonel E.C.W. Myers stood at 16,000 *andartes* for the regular ELAS units and 16,000 more in the ELAS armed reserves. Between the spring of 1944 and Greece's liberation, ELAS dominated the Greek resistance movement: in November 1944, ELAS's regular force stood at about 70,000 *andartes*, forming ten divisions, supported by a further 50,000 in the ELAS armed reserves. By that stage, ELAS GHQ had assumed army status, while intermediate headquarters or *Omádes Merarhion* (so-called 'groups of divisions') had also been formed (for the ELAS order of battle, see page 13). Members of EPON, EAM's youth groups, had also been integrated into the ELAS divisions with one so-called 'model EPON platoon' for each regiment and one model group for each battalion.

As ELAS grew, so too did its needs for officers, who were recruited from two main pools. The first was composed of former regular Greek Army officers who took to the mountains to fight against the Axis occupiers, including some who had originally joined competing guerrilla factions. After ELAS liquidated Psarros's EKKA in the spring of 1944, many of its officers joined ELAS; Saráfis himself only joined ELAS after his own guerrilla band, AAA, had been similarly liquidated. By the time of Greece's liberation, some 800 former regular Greek Army officers (from the days of the Greek monarchy) and some 1,500 more of Republican convictions had joined ELAS, making up around 45 per cent of its entire officer corps. The second source of officer recruitment was ELAS's own cadet-officer training school, established in July 1943 at Redina in the Agrafa Mountains. The school's first class of junior lieutenants graduated in late September 1943 and, by the time of liberation in October 1944, some 1,270 reserve officers – one-quarter of ELAS's entire officer corps – had graduated from the school.

Communications were a major shortcoming of the ELAS bands. Originally ensured through couriers, communications often proved unreliable, especially in emergencies, forcing ELAS to turn to field telephones. In the summer of 1943, every ELAS division received orders to establish a communications company and every regiment a communications platoon. By August 1943, direct telephone communications had been established between ELAS GHQ and each of the four ELAS divisions then in existence. For all their merits, telephone communications proved unreliable when they were needed the most, such as during enemy mopping-up operations, in the early stages of which the Axis forces prioritized the disruption of

A group of BLOs photographed somewhere in Greece's mountains in 1943 or 1944. Except when they infiltrated urban settlements, BLOs wore their regular home unit uniforms, to avoid forsaking the Hague Convention protections if taken prisoner. Their British Army uniforms also doubled as symbols of authority vis-à-vis the *andartes*, who were more willing to defer to those visibly serving with the prestigious British Army. (Athens War Museum)

telephone wires. To address this concern, ELAS GHQ turned to radio communications, seeking to emulate the example of the British Liaison Officers (BLOs), who invariably travelled around the Greek countryside with radio operators in their midst, to be able to liaise directly with Middle East Command. By the time of Greece's liberation, all ELAS divisions possessed and used radio sets.

ELAS largely relied on pack animals to transport its supplies, as motor transport was something of a rarity in wartime Greece, especially in the rugged countryside. The pack animals used were made available by the locals, mostly without the expectation of pecuniary reward (ELAS *andartes* are known to have shared their rations with the animal handlers and furnished animal fodder).

Finally, a word on rations. Since Greece was, even in peacetime, a food-importing country, feeding sizeable guerrilla forces remained a challenge throughout the National Resistance. Foodstuffs were procured locally, either through requisitioning or through purchase, with ELAS having established its own price-scale for their acquisition.

Weapons and personal equipment

ELAS procured its weapons and ammunition through three main sources: war booty, Allied supply drops and, following Italy's surrender to the Allies in September 1943, the former Italian occupation forces' stocks (those not surrendered to, or taken by, the Germans). Ammunition was in scarce supply, however, chronically impeding both operations and training. Clothing and shoes were also not available in sufficient quantities, which explains the motley appearance of ELAS guerrillas. The main sources of clothing and shoes were stocks of pre-war regular Greek Army uniforms, air-dropped Allied supplies (mostly British battledress), locally requisitioned clothing and uniform items manufactured in guerrilla workshops. Clothing and boots were also taken from fallen or captured enemy troops. Italy's surrender would prove something of a boon, also in this respect. Cold-weather clothes were, generally, in even shorter supply, with many cases of frostbite reported among ELAS personnel.

Saráfis and his retinue review a line-up of ELAS *andartes*, most likely in the spring of 1944. The youthful looks of the men he salutes suggest that these could be members of EPON, the ELAS youth organization, on the occasion of their integration into an ELAS combat unit. What is noteworthy is their uniform appearance and their disciplined turnout, two of the main achievements of Saráfis during his tenure as ELAS commander. (Athens War Museum)

ELAS naval forces

Although it had no air assets, ELAS was the only Greek guerrilla band to boast a (modest) naval arm, in service between 1942 and 1945. The essentially coastal fleet fielded by ELAN consisted of armed motor sailing vessels of over 7kts speed, with a loading capacity of around 10 tons and a crew of up to 18 men; smaller, armed motor crafts with a loading capacity of up to 10 tons and a crew of up to 12 men; and other, unarmed transportation craft. ELAN's armed fleet formed seven squadrons of up to four flotillas each, and one autonomous flotilla of six vessels. These operated under the overall command of ELAS GHQ but were attached to the ELAS divisions in whose jurisdiction their shore bases belonged. ELAN's final tally reached roughly 100 motor vessels – several of which boasted a displacement of over 200 tons – operated by a force of 1,200 officers, *kapetánioi* and guerrillas. ELAN carried out both offensive actions (harassment and plundering of enemy transport, and escort of ELAS convoys) and logistical support missions (transfer of friendly forces, food, equipment, and supplies, including between Pelion (Greece) and neighbouring Turkey).

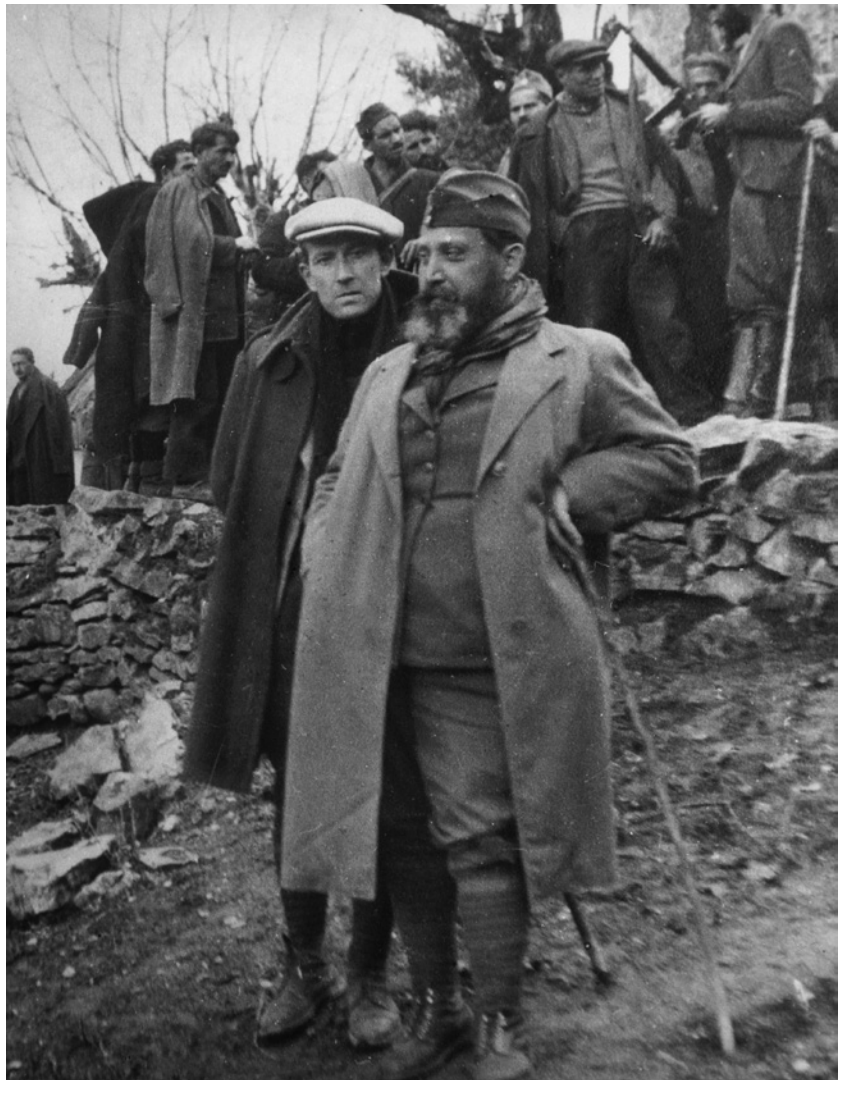
ELAS order of battle, end of November 1944

Regular ELAS (total establishment: 67,000 men), as follows:
Macedonia Group of divisions: four divisions (13 regiments, 12,500 men)
Roumeli Group of divisions: two divisions (six regiments, 11,500 men)
One army corps in Athens/Piraeus (six regiments and one car company, 9,000 men)
Peloponnese division (five regiments, 11,000 men)
Thessaly division (four regiments, 9,000 men)
Epirus division (six regiments, 5,000 men)
Cretan division (three regiments, 4,000 men)
Aegean Islands Brigade (two regiments, one each on Lesbos and Samos, 3,000 men)
Cavalry Brigade (two regiments, 1,500 men)
GHQ Guard Battalion (500 men)
In addition, there were ELAN (1,200 men); National Guard (10,800 men); and the ELAS armed reserves (50,000 men).

EDES: THE JUNIOR RESISTANCE ARMY

Organization and command structure

EDES was originally founded as a political resistance movement and, by mid-1942, it had found a commander-in-chief for its guerrilla arm: Colonel Napoleon Zervas, a former regular Greek Army officer of Republican convictions dismissed in the 1930s for earlier subversive activities and, like many, denied the possibility of joining in Greece's defence during the Greco-Italian War. After Britain had committed to support EDES, Zervas took to the mountains (even if only reluctantly), at the head of only a handful of *andartes*. When Lieutenant-Colonel Myers first met Zervas in November 1942, the latter commanded a modest 150 men, of whom one-third took part in the Gorgopotamos River railway bridge sabotage on 24–25 November. By early 1943, EDES had expanded to about 600 *andartes*; by April 1943 to 1,000; and by the summer of the same year to an estimated 5,000, backed by an equal number of EDES armed reservists.



Napoleon Zervas, commander-in-chief and leader of EDES. Following a distinguished military career, which included his participation in the Balkan Wars and World War I, he became involved in political intrigue during the 1920s, which cost him his commission and put a premature end to his progression to higher office. Zervas closely aligned himself with the British during the National Resistance, becoming an instrument for the pursuit of their policies in Greece. After the end of World War II, he formed his own political party, entered parliament and held ministerial office. He withdrew from politics in 1951 and died in Athens on 10 December 1957. (Athens War Museum)

Until the summer of 1943, EDES operated small guerrilla bands led by junior but capable officers possessed of considerable independence within their area of operational responsibility. As it grew, EDES reorganized its forces, recasting them into more formal military formations: by July 1943, EDES had established up to ten (understrength) divisions or smaller tactical units of two regiments each. Each regiment consisted of two (understrength) battalions, with a total establishment of about 1,000. The EDES headquarters and the bulk of these forces were in Epirus, with smaller groups operating in Thessaly and the Peloponnese.

Despite the establishment, at the behest of the Allies, and the short-lived operation of a combined Greek guerrilla forces headquarters, opposing political views soon brought ELAS and EDES into open conflict. By late 1943, EDES had been all but destroyed by ELAS, bringing the latter closer to its avowed goal of monopolizing the armed resistance movement. To counterbalance the preponderance of ELAS, Britain increased its support to EDES and discontinued its supplies to ELAS. In mid-1944, with the German forces' withdrawal approaching, the British also sent Greek reinforcements from the Middle East to help replenish the fledgling EDES. By midsummer 1944, taking advantage of the Plaka Armistice (29 February 1944), which put an end to inter-guerrilla hostilities, EDES reached a ceiling of 12,000 *andartes* organized in four divisions. In the autumn of 1944, after their final mopping-up operations in response to the guerrilla offensive (Operation *Noah's Ark*), the Germans estimated the strength of EDES at about 8,000 men.

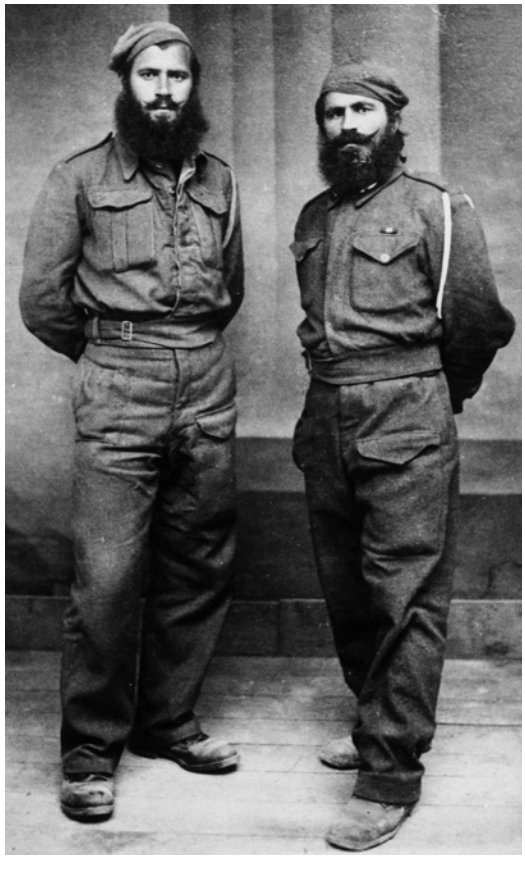
Captain Christos Papadatos (at left), chief-of-staff of the EDES Epirus headquarters, and 2nd Lieutenant Marios Maniakis give a leg up to a British NCO (a radio operator), in October 1943. BLOs invariably travelled around the Greek countryside in the company of their radio operator(s), who played a crucial role in maintaining contact between Middle East Command in Cairo and the Greek guerrilla bands affiliated to the Allied cause. (Athens War Museum)

EDES, which, in July 1943, had changed its name to EOEA, at the suggestion of the British, to signal the break with its formerly anti-Monarchist political stance, remained throughout the creature of Zervas, its military leader, who, in turn, owed the existence of his guerrilla movement to British support. After EDES had reneged on its former Republican agenda, the association between Zervas and the British became even closer, to the point that the EDES headquarters was subordinated to Middle East Command and to the British-sponsored Greek government-in-exile, which was loyal to exiled King George II of the Hellenes.

Recruitment base

Following Zervas's declaration for King George II of the Hellenes in March 1943, EDES's political credibility with pro-Monarchist circles increased. As a result, many pro-Monarchist former regular Greek Army officers flocked to the mountains, swelling the ranks of EDES. Many of them were, politically, right-wing and, in some cases, not immune to charges of collaboration. Although it is difficult to establish Zervas's personal complicity in collaboration, there is some circumstantial evidence to corroborate that charge against him, some of it provided by

Two EDES officers (on the left, Captain Gheorghios Agoros) flank a smiling BLO, somewhere in the mountains of Greece, during the Axis occupation of Greece. (Athens War Museum)



Studio portrait of two EDES *andartes*, photographed in November 1944, just days after the withdrawal of the last German troops from Thessaloniki. They are both turned out in battledress, and wear *Evzoni*-like moulded fezzes (without the characteristic black tassel). As they display no visible insignia, it is difficult to identify their rank. The meaning of their shoulder cords is unclear, but these are likely to designate their function rather than their rank. The man standing on the right also displays an unidentified decoration ribbon. (Athens War Museum)

none other than General der Gebirgstruppe Hubert Lanz, commander of the XXII. Gebirgskorps. What is undisputed is that, between October 1943 and June 1944, a 'silent truce' was in place between EDES and the Germans, who had invested in Zervas's neutrality and attributed to Allied coercion his subsequent re-opening of hostilities against them.

Below the level of its officer corps, EDES recruited its members from among the peasants and mountain populations, similarly to ELAS. Kinship, personal allegiance to the recruiter, local specificities or pure luck determined which of the rival factions a recruit joined. Allied supplies (which included gold sovereigns) also proved an invaluable incentive for EDES recruitment, both because they conferred the prestige of Allied recognition and because they promised fresh recruits a less precarious existence to the one that the more destitute among them eked out in their native villages. EDES is not known to have used force to recruit peasants to its cause, with recruitment boosted by the aura of the Gorgopotamos sabotage operation and the brutal reprisals to which the Axis occupiers increasingly resorted to obstruct the growth of the resistance movement. Following the Plaka Armistice, recruitment for EDES was limited to within the boundaries of the area it controlled (Epirus). As this was relatively small and sparsely populated, the mass that EDES could hope to attain was limited and, although its strength fluctuated, it was always considerably smaller than ELAS.

Weapons and personal equipment

Not unlike their ELAS counterparts, EDES guerrillas wore a mix of military and civilian clothing items, including moulded fezzes made of felt, woollen

Four EDES officers (from left to right, Captain Dimitrios Georghiadis, Captain Gheorghios Agoros, Captain Christos Papadatos and Reserve 2nd Lieutenant Katsiaounis) in a photograph taken at the EDES-controlled port of Splantza (present-day Ammoudia, in the vicinity of Parga), most likely in 1943, on the occasion of an Allied delivery of supplies. The BLOs considered EDES to be tactically superior to rival guerrilla bands, at least in early 1943, thanks to the formal training of its former regular Greek Army officers. (Athens War Museum)

shepherds' coats and indigenous kilts. EDES shared much the same sources of personal equipment as ELAS, making it difficult to distinguish between EDES and ELAS *andartes* in period photographs. The rival bands also shared the same sources of weapons, with EDES guerrillas carrying a similar assortment of Greek, Italian and German-made rifles, and British, German and Italian-made automatic weapons as their ELAS counterparts. One notable difference between these two partisan armies was that, from the summer of 1944, EDES was equipped with some heavier weapons, in the form of mountain artillery pieces (see page 18), delivered by boat to the western Greece sea ports, such as Parga, that EDES controlled. Significantly, the British kept up their weapons supplies to EDES throughout the occupation, allowing its command to counterbalance its numerical inferiority to ELAS with a qualitative parity.

Group photograph of a company of EDES *andartes* in the aftermath of an engagement with German forces in the Tzoumerka Mountains (Epirus), in the autumn of 1943. Their weapons include three 6.5mm Breda 30 light machine guns (the Italian armed forces' poorly designed standard squad weapon during World War II), and one 8mm Breda 37 medium machine gun (in the foreground, left, resting on a tripod). These weapons would have been taken over from their former Italian owners, following Italy's exit from World War II, and briefly used against the Germans until EDES's informal truce with General der Gebirgstruppe Hubert Lanz's troops in October

Colonel Zervas, accompanied by some of his men, holds a discussion with British naval or Royal Marine officers on the occasion of the delivery to EDES, by sea, of Allied supplies. It has been suggested that the bearded man standing next to Zervas in what looks like a British Army uniform is Dragolijub 'Draža' Mihailović, leader of the non-Communist Yugoslav Resistance (Chetnik) movement. Although it is true that the two men had sought to establish contact and meet in Epirus, there is no evidence that they ever actually met. (Athens War Museum)

GUERRILLA TRAINING, TACTICS AND OPERATIONS

ELAS and EDES recruits with previous military experience were trained for up to a week, typically on a unit-by-unit basis down to platoon level, with an emphasis on small-arms handling, use and basic repair. Those without military experience attended courses lasting between two and four weeks, during which they were taught drill and weapons handling as well as mine laying and the planting of demolition charges. Tactical training mostly took place on smaller-scale operations against 'softer' enemy targets. The intensity and quality of training depended on two factors: first, the ability and initiative of local commanders; and second, the need to field fresh troops for participation in actual operations. Training also included some political indoctrination, which, one suspects, would have occupied

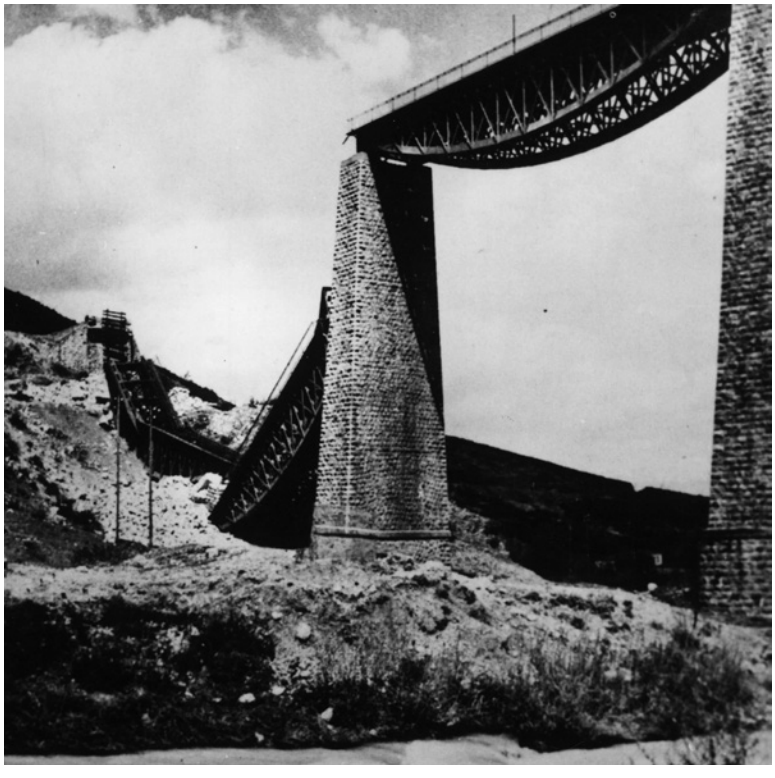
Surrounded by members of his staff, Colonel Zervas proudly inspects a battery of US-made 75mm pack howitzers on M1 carriages. Despite being the junior resistance grouping, EDES was the only partisan army in wartime Greece to field mountain artillery pieces, delivered to it by sea after the fall of southern Italy to the Allies. (Athens War Museum)

Fighters of ELAS's X Division are trained on the use of mines by Lieutenant Livingstone (centre) and a second unidentified member of the British Military Mission in Dasochori, Grevena (Western Macedonia), in August 1944. (Iason Chandrinos Collection)

a larger part of the training schedule of ELAS fighters. Allied Military Mission reports concur that the overall level of training of the average rank-and-file *andartis* left something to be expected: fire discipline was less than ideal and unit coordination standards not too high. What Greek *andartes* lacked in those respects, however, they made up for in tenacity and, for many, in near-fanatical bravery.

The tactic most widely deployed was the ambush. Following an ambush, guerrilla units would withdraw to their mountain sanctuaries, while reservists would melt back into the civilian population. Other favoured guerrilla operations included the laying of mines and the planting of demolition charges, mostly by night, to disrupt transportation routes and lines of communication (notably, railway lines, tunnels and telephone wires), causing casualties and tying down enemy security and engineer personnel. From September 1943 onwards, a great deal of the explosives used for guerrilla demolition work were salvaged from unexploded ordnance (including sea mines) left behind by the Italians, following Italy's surrender. So-called 'stone mines' (pressure-type explosive devices with a non-metallic casing, built to resemble stones) were put to good

Cadet officers attend a mortar training course at the ELAS officers' school in Redina (Agrafa Mountains) in the summer of 1944. The mortar shown here is an 81mm weapon of Italian manufacture. (Iason Chandrinos Collection)



The aftermath of the Gorgopotamos River railway bridge sabotage operation on 24–25 November 1942, one of the most spectacular and strategically significant sabotage actions anywhere in occupied Europe during World War II. The success of the SOE-planned operation, which resulted in the flow of supplies to Rommel's Deutsches Afrikakorps being discontinued for six weeks, persuaded the British to invest in Greece's resistance movement. The latter came to depend on Allied support, allowing the British and, later, the Americans, to harness it in pursuit of their wartime objectives and longer-term geo-strategic aspirations. (Athens War Museum)

use in Greece as they were simple enough for the average *andartis* to use, and difficult for the occupation forces to detect amid the rock-strewn terrain. Sniping at individual soldiers, unguarded car columns, isolated vehicles and small enemy parties was also commonplace, making the Greek countryside a dangerous place for the enemy. Larger-scale actions at the initiative of the *andartes* were less commonplace and, when they did occur, they were violent but brief, typically followed by longer periods of operational inactivity.

One of the less savoury aspects of the *andartes*' behaviour was their contempt for the rules that governed the conduct of war. There is ample evidence to suggest that Greek *andartes* routinely tortured their prisoners, less to extract information and more as a sport: prisoner abuse, mutilation and execution were commonplace in Greece's mountains. Attacks on unprotected enemy ambulances and hospital trains were also not unheard of. These acts of savagery attracted vengeful Axis retaliation, mostly against innocent civilians, feeding the cycle of blood and intensifying the mutual sense of hatred between the oppressed and their oppressors.

Larger-scale guerrilla operations in Greece were mandated and coordinated by the Special Operations Executive (SOE). The first major operation in which Greek *andartes* participated, under British command, was the blasting of the Gorgopotamos River railway bridge, one of the largest sabotage operations in occupied Europe and one of the most fateful, as it would persuade the British to invest in armed subversion, as opposed to political opposition, across occupied Europe. The second major operation began in June 1943, when SOE mandated the Greek *andartes* to launch Operation *Animals*, a sustained, two-month-long campaign of ambushes, convoy attacks and communication network disruptions, to mislead the Germans into believing that an Allied invasion of Greece was imminent. Operation *Animals* was a success, causing significant damage to the Axis forces and deflecting some of their attention and resources from the Allies' true objective, the island of Sicily. Major guerrilla operations resumed between July and October 1944, as part of Operation *Noah's Ark*, to harass the Axis forces during their 1,600km-long retreat towards the central and western Balkans. Although it did hold up the German retreat, causing attrition to the occupation forces, Operation *Noah's Ark* did not impede the orderly withdrawal of the German troops, which had been completed by November 1944.

GERMAN OCCUPATION FORCES

Organization and occupation record

An attack on Greece was not in Hitler's original plans, and it may have never materialized had it not been for Italy's failed invasion, in October 1940, which damaged the reputation of the Axis, and for the subsequent stationing of some British troops (including air assets) on Greek territory, which exposed Germany's flank to the threat of attacks on Romania, a major source of fuel for Germany's war machine during World War II. After they had overpowered Greece, the Germans planned to occupy the country with only a limited contingent of troops. By the autumn of 1943 this had become an impossibility due to the surrender of their Italian allies, which temporarily left much of rural Greece in the hands of the *andartes*. This event forced the Germans to take on the role of Greece's main occupation force, at a time when the Allies were spreading rumours of an imminent landing in western Greece or the Aegean Sea islands. These rumours were taken seriously by the Germans and their Bulgarian allies, even after the Allied landings on Sicily (Operation *Husky*), in July–August 1943. What is also worth noting is that, in the early stages of their occupation of Greece, the Germans were more favourably disposed vis-à-vis the Greeks compared to many other occupied peoples and, especially, the Slavs, whom the Germans regarded as racially inferior and lacking in culture. As World War II wore on, however, and with the Greek resistance movement becoming more assertive, the Germans hardened their stance, unleashing a campaign of reprisals that would cost the lives of tens of thousands of civilians (including hostages, Communist sympathizers, and saboteurs, actual or presumed) and the destruction of hundreds of villages and settlements across the country.

The German occupation forces in Greece chronically suffered from two shortcomings, both of which had an adverse effect on their coordination and overall efficiency, especially at the level of intelligence sharing and exploitation: first, their inadequate numbers and, second,

BELOW LEFT
A smartly dressed German infantry officer and several NCOs pose for the camera on the deck of a troop-transport vessel, en route to Crete. Despite the Axis efforts, Greek waters were never safe against submarine, surface-vessel and airborne attacks, forcing the occupying forces to adopt the practice of pre-emptive safety vest-wearing for those travelling by boat along the Aegean and the Ionian seas. (Author's Collection)

BELOW RIGHT
German troops line up for inspection along the pier at Piraeus port, en route to North Africa. The closer Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel's Deutsches Afrikakorps came to the Suez Canal, the greater the importance of Greece to the Germans, who relied heavily on the country's underdeveloped road and railway network, as well as on its ports and airports, to transport men and supplies to North Africa. (Author's Collection)

ABOVE LEFT
Interesting photograph of a German NCO flanked, on each side, by two members of an unidentified *Ost-Bataillon* or Eastern volunteers' unit. Several *Ost-Bataillone* and Eastern volunteers' legions served in Greece during World War II, as occupation troops, including the Legion Freies Arabien (Deutsche-Arabischen Bataillon 845), the I. (Georgische) and III. (Kaukasische) battalions of the Turkestanisches Infanterie-Regiment Bergmann, Nordkaukasische Bataillon 1003, Armenische Infanterie-Bataillon 814 and Turkestanische Infanterie-Bataillon 789. (Author's Collection)

ABOVE RIGHT
A column of SdKfz 221 armoured cars and a single SdKfz 263 eight-wheel reconnaissance vehicle of Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 999 parade along the Thessaloniki waterfront in the spring of 1943, shortly before being transferred to Rhodes. As the German occupation forces were chronically short of fuel, parades such as these were relatively seldom events. (Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe/ Wikimedia/Public Domain)

their complex organization, characterized by a multitude of commands exercising overlapping responsibilities. Responsibility for the occupation of Greece was assigned to Heeresgruppe E (Generaloberst Alexander Löhr), which was part of Oberbefehlshaber Südost (Generalfeldmarschall Maximilian von Weichs). Unusually, no 'armies' were subordinate to Heeresgruppe E, which, in the autumn of 1943, consisted of two corps: the LXVIII. Armeekorps (General der Flieger Hellmuth Felmy) and the XXII. Gebirgskorps (General der Gebirgstruppe Hubert Lanz). The former was responsible for securing and defending eastern Greece and most of the Peloponnese, while the latter oversaw the security and defence of western Greece, from Epirus to the Gulf of Patras. Besides the tactical organization of Heeresgruppe E, there was a German military administration – Militärbefehlshaber Griechenland (General der Flieger Wilhelm Speidel) – that was not subordinate to Heeresgruppe E but, instead, to the Militärbefehlshaber Südost (Belgrade). The problem of overlapping competences was exacerbated by the creation, around the time of Italy's surrender, of the post of *Höherer SS- und Polizei-Führer* for Greece (Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS Walter Schimana) who, although notionally subordinate to Speidel, in fact operated under the control of Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler, and by the presence in Greece of a special plenipotentiary (Hermann Neubacher), who represented the interests of Germany's Ministry of Economics and Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Turning to the question of their qualitative and quantitative adequacy, German troops stationed in Greece were estimated at around 140,000 at the end of 1943, and just over 100,000 in August 1944, broken down into six divisions and several smaller-sized formations (for the German occupation forces' order of battle, see page 24). Some of those formations were front-line, combat-ready troops, as in the case of the 1. Gebirgs-Division and the 4. SS-Polizei-Panzergrenadier-Division, while others were either second-rate troops, only suitable for garrison and stationary defence duties, on account of the advanced age or poor

physical condition of their men or were otherwise deemed unreliable (as in the case of the non-German troops stationed in Greece, which included Armenian, Arab and Turkic forces). The shortage of tough and reliable troops was only (partly) addressed as of late 1943, with the increasing recruitment and use of locally raised collaborationist forces (a topic touched on in more detail later in this study). If the forces available to the Germans were never sufficient to fully secure the key infrastructures facilitating the unobstructed transport and distribution of troops and supplies across Greece or to pacify the countryside, they would prove just about enough to keep the *andartes* from overrunning the major urban centres and liberating Greece.

Anti-partisan tactics and operations

To address the intensifying Resistance problem in Greece, the Germans relied on a combination of major and smaller-scale anti-partisan actions in the mountains of Greece. The Germans used the term *Banditenbekämpfung* ('anti-brigand') to describe those actions, betraying their contempt for partisan forces, and a certain misunderstanding regarding their level of organization. To conduct smaller-scale anti-partisan operations the Germans made tactical use of so-called *Jagdkommandos* (hunting parties), previously used in Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union: these were small-sized detachments made up of younger and physically fit men, with prior combat experience, who would 'go native', to detect concentrations of *andartes*. Once they had detected their 'prey', the *Jagdkommandos* would either eliminate it themselves or ask for reinforcements, if the partisan forces were too large or too well dug in.

Efficient as they were, *Jagdkommandos* did not suffice to stem the tide of the armed resistance movement. As a result, the Germans also launched, starting in 1943, several larger-scale 'mopping-up' anti-partisan operations (see the Chronology section of this book). The tactical manoeuvre that the Germans deployed when conducting those operations was the encirclement, through two, roughly concentric circles, one outer, cast wide and more thinly manned, and one inner,

BELOW LEFT
A column of *Gebirgsjäger* (mountain troops) move through a village during an anti-partisan operation, most likely in 1944. German troops only passed through villages they considered safe, suggesting that this photograph was taken in a part of the Greek countryside temporarily cleared of guerrilla bands. (Author's Collection)

BELOW RIGHT
PzKpfw IV medium tanks of Panzer-Abteilung Rhodos move past the walls of the Old City of Rhodes, close to the Marine Gate, in about June 1943. This unit, later integrated into Panzergrenadier-Division 'Brandenburg', was, among others, equipped with 15 StuG III assault guns and three StuH 42 assault howitzers as well as 15 PzKpfw IV. (Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe/Wikimedia/Public Domain)

Studio portrait of a *Gebirgsjäger*, with the rank of an *Obergefreiter* – see the double upper-sleeve chevron embroidered in silver thread against a dark background – most likely photographed post-1943. *Gebirgsjäger* were among the most formidable German Army formations to be stationed in Greece during World War II. One of the major successes of the Greek resistance was to tie down such élite Wehrmacht formations, which, if available for use on other fronts, could have helped to turn, be it only temporarily, the tide of war in Germany's favour. (Author's Collection)

manned by the more combat-ready and physically fit elements. Both circles were gradually tightened, until the guerrillas in the encirclement were pushed into a 'pocket', small enough for a final assault, to eliminate or capture them.

Before conducting larger-scale operations, the Germans would meticulously gather intelligence and assemble tactical data, through use of their network of spies, camouflaged observation posts, tactical air reconnaissance, the monitoring of the guerrilla bands' radio communications, the tapping of their telephone lines and the interrogation of prisoners or suspected guerrilla sympathizers. To preserve confidentiality and to throw the *andartes* off the scent of an impending mopping-up operation, the Germans would also spread misinformation (including among their own troops) or make visible preparations for dummy (cover-up) operations. In those cases where an area of encirclement contained villages or other, major settlements, these were carefully reconnoitred and, typically, approached through an enveloping manoeuvre, to avoid death traps for the German troops.

Although it was not unusual for the *andartes* to evade capture (often by lying low) or to altogether escape enemy encirclement during mopping-up operations, especially under cover of darkness or by exploiting temporary gaps in the encirclements, these operations were, by and large, successful at eliminating considerable numbers of guerrillas: Operations *Wulf, Horrido* and *Rentier* alone, resulted in some 1,000 *andartes* killed and 500 being taken prisoner. That said, major anti-partisan operations were also costly for the Germans, in *matériel* and personnel alike, and, for all the planning and resources that went into them, they never achieved the goal of eradicating the guerrilla problem in Greece. It is telling that, in July and August 1944, the Germans suffered some 940 killed, 1,230 wounded and 280 missing in fighting against the guerrilla bands. Perhaps the most significant success of the German anti-partisan operations was to keep open the north–south railway line that connected Athens to Thessaloniki long enough to allow for the evacuation of the bulk of their forces – except for the garrisons in Rhodes and Crete, which were left behind to fend for themselves. The last of the German troops to be evacuated from Greece crossed into Yugoslavia on 2 November 1944, ending the painful chapter of Greece's occupation, in anticipation of the formal opening of the Greek Civil War, on 31 March 1946.

German occupation forces' order of battle, 20 August 1944

(Heeresgruppe E and Militärbefehlshaber Griechenland, estimated at 100,000 troops)
Heeresgruppe E
Kommandant Ost-Ägäis: Festungs-Brigade 939; Küstenjäger-Abteilung 'Brandenburg'; Artillerie-Regiment 627; Sturm-Division Rhodos; Panzer-Abteilung Rhodos; Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 999; Festungs-Brigade 967; Festungs-Brigade 968
Kommandant der Festung Kreta: 133. Festungs-Division; 22. Luftlande Infanterie-Division; Artillerie-Regiment Kreta
LXVIII. Armeekorps: 41. Festungs-Division; 117. Jäger-Division; 11. Luftwaffen-Felddivision; Sicherungs-Regiment 86
XXII. Gebirgskorps: 1. Gebirgs-Division; 104. Jäger-Division; Festungs-Brigade 964; Festungs-Brigade 966; Festungs-Brigade 1017
LXXXXI. Armeekorps: 4. SS-Polizei-Panzergrenadier-Division; Festungs-Brigade 963; Festungs-Brigade 969; Sicherungs-Regiment 639; Sicherungs-Regiment 91; Landesschützen-Regiment 81; Didymoteicho Regiment
Other commands in Greece (not under Heeresgruppe E): Militärbefehlshaber Griechenland; Marinebefehlshaber Griechenland; Kommandierender General der Deutschen Luftwaffe in Griechenland; 19. Flak-Division

RESISTANCE LEADERS

1: Protokapetánios Aris Velouchiòtis, ELAS GHQ, Lamia, October 1944
2: Antistrátigos Stéfanos Saráfis, Caserta, Naples, September 1944
3: Syntagmatàrchis Napoleon Zervas, Derviziani, November 1942

RESISTANCE FORCES (1)

1: *Dioikitìs tagmatos*, ELAS, Amfissa, June 1944
2: *Mavroskoufis*, ELAS, Viniani, October 1943
3: *Andartissa*, 34th Parnassus Regiment, ELAS, Dervenochoria, October 1943

RESISTANCE FORCES (2)

1: *Dioikitis tagmatos*, Athens Division, ELAS, October 1944
2: *Aetópoulo*, ELAS, Paramythia, April 1944
3: *Andartis*, 24th Regiment, EDES, Splantza, October 1943

RESISTANCE FORCES (3)

1: SOE liaison officer, Roumeli, May 1943

2: *Dioikitìs tagmatos*, 40th Regiment, EDES, Derviziani, April 1943

3: *Andartis*, 2nd Regiment, ELAS, Thebes, November 1944

AXIS OCCUPATION FORCES (1)

1: *Küstenjäger*, Küstenjäger-Abteilung `Brandenburg', Rhodes, July 1943
2: *Gefreiter*, Jäger-Regiment 724, Agrinio, June 1943
3: *SS-Sturmmann*, SS-Polizei-Panzergrenadier-Regiment 7, Larissa, June 1944

AXIS OCCUPATION FORCES (2)

1: *Caporale*, 13º Reggimento di fanteria `Pinerolo', Kastoria, November 1942
2: *SS-Unterscharführer*, SS-Pionier-Bataillon 4, Kozani, July 1944
3: *Carabiniere*, VI Battaglione Carabinieri Reali, Messolonghi, March 1943

BULGARIAN OCCUPATION FORCES

1: *Podpolkovnik*, 7th Infantry Division, Thessaloniki, March 1943
2: *Rednik*, 16th Infantry Division, Xanthi, October 1942
3: *Polkovnik*, 11th Infantry Division, Komotini (Gjumjurdschina), June 1941

COLLABORATIONIST FORCES

1: *Evzon*, 2nd Security Regiment, Patras, May 1944
2: *Ypostràtigos*, 1st Security Regiment, Athens, September 1943
3: Militiaman, *Lòchos Asfaleias*, EES, Kozani, March 1944

ITALIAN OCCUPATION FORCES

Following Greece's capitulation to the Axis forces, Italy, whose army had suffered 63,000 casualties in six months of bloody fighting against the Greek Army in the Pindus Mountains and Albania, was assigned the largest part of mainland Greece (as well as the Ionian Sea islands, the south Aegean Sea islands and the easternmost corner of Crete). Contrary to the widespread perception (itself the product of post-war historical revisionism) that the Italians were 'benevolent occupiers', Fascist Italy's short-lived occupation of Greece was harsh, with Italian forces responsible for atrocities not unlike those committed by their German and Bulgarian allies. The contempt with which the average Greek treated the Italian occupiers, and the concerted efforts of the first collaborationist government of Lieutenant-General Gheorghios Tsolakoglou to drive a wedge between Italy and its German allies, frustrated, to an extent, Italy's occupation agenda, thereby weakening its grip on the part of Greece under its nominal control.

Fascist Italy divided Greece into three occupation zones: the Ionian Sea islands, the south Aegean Sea islands and mainland Greece. These were ruled directly by Italy; by contrast, the Germans had appointed a collaborationist government to represent, politically, the interests of occupied Greece, and to handle its administrative matters. The Ionian Sea islands came under Italy's direct political, economic and military control, with the medium- to long-term aims of their 'Italianization' and annexation (Italy had applied the same tactic with the Dodecanese islands, which it had annexed following the Italo-Turkish War of 1911–12). A similar policy of forced Italianization was also followed for the south Aegean Sea islands, where a cultural, administrative and economic separation process was instituted, in preparation for their integration into the Dodecanese. These unpopular measures and ineffective annexation efforts were to cost the inhabitants of the south Aegean Sea islands dearly, as supplies ran low and economic activity ground to a halt. Italy's policy vis-à-vis the Greek Jews living under its control was more

BELOW LEFT
Two smartly dressed Italian infantry officers (from left to right, an elderly *colonello* and a youthful *tenente*) pose for the camera, in a photograph taken at an unidentified location in Greece, in March 1942. They are both turned out in standard, officers' quality Italian infantry service uniforms (their tailor-made tunics are cut from fine gabardine, so-called *cordellino* material), and carry holstered Beretta M34 service pistols, the Italian armed forces' standard sidearm, issued to officers, NCOs and machine-gun crews. (Author's Collection)

BELOW RIGHT
Taken in Athens, at the Herodes Atticus Odeon, in June 1942, this photograph shows Italian and German troops attending what appears to be an official event (the Italian officers sitting in the front rows of the Roman amphitheatre carry their ceremonial swords). (Author's Collection)

This Italian soldier wears the M40 uniform while on guard duty, most likely in Athens, in December 1942. He is equipped with a 6.5mm Mannlicher-Carcano M1891 rifle, a bayonet, twin ammunition pouches and an M33/34 helmet. (Author's Collection)

A haggard-looking, off-duty Italian infantry soldier, in a superior-quality, pre-war, M33-pattern service uniform (note the black collar), in Omonoia Square in Athens. The photograph is dated 9 June 1943. (Author's Collection)

ambivalent, resulting in some innocent lives being spared. It is unclear, however, whether this policy was an indication of benevolence vis-à-vis the Greek Jews or an attempt to demonstrate Italy's autonomy of action with respect to the Germans.

Italian occupation forces in mainland Greece had the dubious distinction of being those upon whom the incipient Greek resistance movement cut its teeth. Italian supply convoys were routinely attacked, and their more isolated troop concentrations ambushed. Also, it was Italian troops that garrisoned the Gorgopotamos River railway bridge, with some 30 of them being killed during the successful sabotage operation, reinforcing German prejudices against their Italian allies. Prejudices aside, the Italians never managed to tackle the guerrilla problem in those parts of Greece under their responsibility: the Igoumenitsa–Metsovo–Trikala Road, the only major west–east communication artery in Italian-occupied mainland Greece, was under constant guerrilla attacks and never safe to use, even for armoured columns.

The Italian occupation forces' reaction to the guerrilla problem swung between the irresolute and the disproportionate: following guerrilla attacks, Italian troops would be dispatched to the mountains only to return, in many cases, empty-handed. This induced punitive actions, mostly at the initiative of local commanders, which neither deterred fresh guerrilla raids nor secured the cooperation of the locals. In December 1942, Italian forces burned the villages of Chrysso and Mikro Chorio and executed most of their residents. In February 1943, it was the turn of Domeniko to be razed to the ground, with 194 civilians, including women and children, murdered. In March 1943, Italian forces razed the village of Tsaritsani and executed 40 of its inhabitants; and in June 1943, in retaliation for the blasting of a rail tunnel in the vicinity of Kournovo, the Italians arrested and executed 106 civilians. Already in the summer of 1943, the Italians had withdrawn their garrisons from Greece's countryside, concentrating their forces within the larger urban centres. Unsurprisingly, this facilitated guerrilla activities.

By the time of Italy's surrender, and the demise of the 11ª Armata, between 70 and 80 per cent of the Italian Occupation Zone in Greece was under effective guerrilla control. Thanks to the surrender of the 24ª Divisione di fanteria 'Pinerolo' and the Reggimento 'Lancieri di Aosta' (6°) but also earlier incidents – such as the battle of Bougazi on 4-6 March 1943, during which ELAS forces captured and disarmed an entire Italian battalion – the *andartes* were able to replenish their supply of arms and ammunition from Italian stocks. Italy's surrender had catastrophic consequences for the men of, among others, the 33ª Divisione di fanteria 'Acqui' in Cephalonia, several thousands of whom perished at the hands of their former allies, after their commander, Generale di divisione Antonio Gandin, refused to surrender to the Germans. A similar fate befell the officers of the Italian garrison of the island of Kos.

In summary, the performance in Greece of the Italian armed forces (whose organization, uniforms and equipment have been explored in detail in earlier Osprey publications) was unspectacular, both as an occupation and as an anti-partisan force, the morale of its members low and the quality of their command sub-standard (as reflected in the near-total breakdown of the Italian officers' authority over their troops after Italy's surrender).

Italian occupation forces' selective order of battle, 8 September 1943*

11ª Armata (Generale d'armata Carlo Vecchiarelli; total establishment: 7,000 officers and 165,000 rank and file, of which around 90,000 in mainland Greece, as follows):
III Corpo d'armata (HQ: Thebes): 36ª Divisione di fanteria da montagna 'Forli' (HQ: Athens); 24ª Divisione di fanteria 'Pinerolo' (HQ: Larissa); Reggimento 'Lancieri di Aosta' (6°); Reggimento 'Lancieri di Milano' (7°); Comando truppe Italiane Euboea (HQ: Halkis)
VIII Corpo d'armata (HQ: Agrinio): 33ª Divisione di fanteria 'Acqui' (HQ: Argostoli, Cephalonia); 56ª Divisione di fanteria 'Casale' (HQ: Aetolikon); 29ª Divisione di fanteria 'Piemonte' (HQ: Patras); 59ª Divisione di fanteria da montagna 'Cagliari' (HQ: Tripoli)
XXVI Corpo d'armata (HQ: Ioannina): 37ª Divisione di fanteria da montagna 'Modena' (HQ: Arta); 18° Reggimento di fanteria 'Acqui' (HQ: Corfu); 2° Gruppo alpini 'Valle' (HQ: Ioannina)
Comando Egeo (Rhodes): 6ª Divisione di fanteria 'Cuneo' (HQ: Samos); 50ª Divisione di fanteria 'Regina' (HQ: Rhodes and Kastellorizo)
Comando truppe Italiane Creta (Italian forces under the command of Heeresgruppe E, in Crete): 51ª Divisione di fanteria 'Siena' (HQ: Neapolis, Lasithi); Brigata speciale 'Lecce' (HQ: Kato Horio)
Comando Militare Marittimo della Grecia occidentale (HQ: Patras)
Comando Aeronautica della Grecia (HQ: Athens)
* Not including Carabinieri, Milizia Volontare per la Sicurezza Nationale, Guardia di Finanza units and support services.

BULGARIAN OCCUPATION FORCES

On 1 March 1941 the Kingdom of Bulgaria signed the Axis Tripartite Pact. Soon thereafter, German forces entered Bulgaria via Romania, in preparation for Hitler's invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece. On 20 April 1941, following the collapse of the Greek defences, Bulgarian troops (10th Infantry Division, 2nd Border Guards Brigade and 1st Army Reserve Regiment) crossed into Greece and, without a formal declaration of war, occupied the Greek prefectures of Serres, Drama, Kavala and Rhodope as well as parts of the Evros prefecture (eastern Macedonia and western Thrace minus those parts of the Evros prefecture that bordered Turkey, which were occupied by the Germans). On 14 May 1941, Bulgaria annexed those territories, with the forbearance of the Germans but without their definitive support, creating the *oblast* (region) of Belomorska Thrakia ('White Sea' or Aegean Thrace), a new Bulgarian province of ten districts with a total population of 640,000 inhabitants, stretching from the Strymon (Struma) River in the west, to a straight line connecting the Greek coastal city of Alexandroupolis (Dedeağaç) to the Bulgarian town of Svilengrad in the east. Sofia thus realized one of its unfulfilled territorial aspirations – access to the Aegean Sea – and increased its territory by about 13,000 square kilometres (the equivalent of over one-third of the total area of Belgium).

In July 1943, the Germans allowed Bulgaria to expand its zone of control to also include central and parts of western Macedonia (the territory westwards of the hitherto Bulgarian Occupation Zone, stretching from the Axios (Vardar) River, in the west, to the Strymon River, in the east), as well as Halkidiki (minus the Mount Athos Peninsula). These areas were neither annexed to, nor administered by, Bulgaria, which was to operate there under German supervision (in truth, the Bulgarians overstepped their mandate and only reluctantly withdrew from areas they had invested with their troops, incurring the displeasure of their German patrons). Thessaloniki and an area of 32km around it remained under German control, with the headquarters of the Bulgarian 7th Infantry Division stationed just outside the city limits.

A Bulgarian naval infantryman stands guard above Limenas, on the northern coast of the island of Thassos, facing the Thracian coast. Between 1941 and 1944, Bulgaria garrisoned Thassos and the smaller island of Samothraki with three naval-infantry regiments – two in Thassos and one in Samothraki – as well as coastal-artillery and infantry units. Bulgarian Navy uniforms had a distinct Imperial Russian look about them and had evolved the least from their historical antecedents compared to those worn by men serving with Bulgarian Army and Air Force units. (Bulgarian Archives State Agency/Wikimedia/Public Domain)

ABOVE LEFT
A Bulgarian military band, at the time of the German invasion of Greece. All of its smartly dressed members (including the goggle-wearing junior officer leading it) wear the M36 *kaska*, the standard-issue Bulgarian Army helmet until the outbreak of World War II, but also widely in use during the conflict, only partly replaced by the slightly modified M41 variant. (Author's Collection)

ABOVE RIGHT
Bulgarian and German soldiers at a mixed-troop gathering. Judging by their orderly appearance, the Bulgarians visible here must belong to a front-line (as opposed to a mobilized) unit, among those positioned along the border with neutral Turkey for the duration of World War II. Of interest are the *bustina*-type forage caps worn by the Bulgarian soldiers, complete with a stylized lion badge on the front and a shield in Bulgaria's national colours on the right-hand side. (Author's Collection)

Bulgaria's official policy throughout its Occupation Zone was one of forced 'Bulgarianization', for those amenable to it, and of expulsion or extermination, for those who opposed it. It is telling that, by late 1941, over 100,000 Greeks had left or been forced out of the Bulgarian Occupation Zone; by the end of the war, this number had nearly doubled. Those unwilling to abide by this policy and adopt Bulgarian nationality were deported, after being forced to 'cede' their ancestral homes to the Bulgarian state.

The policies pursued by the occupation authorities caused great resentment, both in Athens (the seat of the Greek puppet government) and within the occupied territories themselves, where an uprising broke out on 28 September 1941, first in the city of Drama and then throughout eastern Macedonia. Following violent clashes between ELAS forces and the Bulgarian police and gendarmerie, Bulgarian troops of the 14th and 39th Infantry regiments seized all men aged between 18 and 45, executed over 3,000 of them in Drama alone (another 10,000 to 12,000 were executed across the countryside, over a period of several weeks) and destroyed entire settlements. The 'Drama Massacre' and the brutal reprisals across eastern Macedonia expedited the exodus of the civilian population from the Bulgarian Occupation Zone into the German Occupation Zone. In March 1943, the Bulgarian occupiers also deported most of the Greek Jews living in their Occupation Zone: it is telling that, of the 780 Jewish deportees from the city of Drama, only 39 survived the Nazi death camps (Bulgaria and Romania did not protect foreign Jews living under their respective control).

The forces (mainly reserve infantry units) that Sofia committed to the occupation of Macedonia and Thrace were considerable, testifying to its concern to secure, at all costs, the new accretions to its territory. Although their numbers fluctuated over time, from about 70,000 in June 1941 to roughly 40,000 in September 1944, they remained substantial throughout the three-year period of the Bulgarian occupation. Bulgarian infantry divisions, of which 12 existed at the start of World War II and 22

by its end, consisted of three infantry regiments each (in turn divided into three infantry battalions, each with three infantry companies, one machine-gun company with 12 medium machine guns, one mortar company with nine 81mm mortars and one anti-tank company with six 20mm guns), one artillery regiment and one anti-aircraft battery with 15 20mm guns.

To complement their occupation forces, the Bulgarians also relied, within their Occupation Zone, on Bulgarian police, gendarmerie and *Ohrana* (secret police) units as well as on paramilitary formations, including the 'Bulgarian Legion'. In early 1942, they also obtained the permission of the German High Command (Thessaloniki) to set up militias in areas outside their Occupation Zone (central and western Macedonia) by recruiting willing members of the local Slavic-speaking minority; at least three militia detachments – so-called 'Ohrana battalions' – were formed in the course of 1943 in the districts of Italian-controlled Kastoria, and German-controlled Edessa and Florina. Greek males of military age were also conscripted into the Bulgarian Army, but mostly assigned to so-called 'construction battalions' – forced-labour units – some of which operated within former Yugoslav territories also under Bulgarian occupation.

Bulgarian occupation troops – largely reservists, as the first-line units of the 3rd Bulgarian Army were stationed in positions along the border with neutral Turkey for most of World War II – conducted anti-partisan operations alongside their German allies, mostly under German command. These actions occurred during Operation *Panther* in the autumn of 1943, to clear the Metsovon Pass and Mount Olympus areas as well as the Edessa–Florina road, and Operations *Wulf*, *Horrido*, *Rentier* and *Iltis* in the spring of 1944, around the time of the launch of the SOE-mandated Operation *Noah's Ark*.

The Bulgarian Occupation Zone was home to several guerrilla bands, which occasionally clashed with the occupation forces, causing them significant attrition. The two main armed resistance organizations in the Bulgarian zone of control were ELAS and the right-wing EAO, led by

A group of Bulgarian gendarmes, policemen and soldiers, dressed in an assortment of uniforms, some of pre-World War II pedigree, pose with two of their 'trophies', most likely in the vicinity of Drama, in the immediate aftermath of the local uprising against Bulgarian rule. This photograph testifies to the barbarity with which the Bulgarian occupation authorities went about curbing the uprising, and to the absence of humanity and self-reflection displayed by those involved in restoring Bulgarian authority over occupied

Greek partisans, most likely members of the right-wing EAO, led by Antonis Fosteridis, pose for the camera in their mountain sanctuary. EAO was mainly composed of Turkophone Pontic Greeks, with partisan warfare experience against the Ottoman Turks in the mountains of the Black Sea coast of Asia Minor. The men visible here appear to be dressed in traditional, black-coloured Pontic Greek costumes. Until the Tanzimat reforms of the mid-19th century, the non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire were to wear dark colours only, to distinguish them from Muslims who, as first-class subjects, were allowed a wider choice of colours. (Athens War Museum)

Antonis Fosteridis (locally known by his Turkish nickname Anton Çavuş, i.e. 'Sergeant Anton'). EAO was primarily composed of Turkophone Pontic Greeks, with partisan warfare experience against the Ottoman Turks in the mountains of Asia Minor's Black Sea coast during 1914–22. Fosteridis, a former rural constable, had his stronghold in the area between Mount Falakro and Mount Lekani (Çal-dağ) in the prefectures of Drama and Kavala, respectively, from where he conducted operations both against ELAS (as of January 1944) and the Bulgarian occupiers. EAO was established with the help and encouragement of the British, who also supplied it with arms and clothing and had BLOs assigned to it. The most important engagement that EAO fought against the Bulgarians was the battle at the Papades bridge on the Nestos River, during 7–11 May 1944: this involved an attempt by a Bulgarian battalion to interdict EAO's collection of a supply drop on Mount Kara-Dere. In charge of a group

Bulgarian occupation forces' selective orders of battle, April 1941–October 1944*

30 April 1941–October 1942: 1st Bulgarian Army (formerly 2nd Bulgarian Army; HQ: Plovdiv) garrisons annex eastern Macedonia and western Thrace with the 1st, 7th, 9th, 11th (mobilized), 13th and the locally recruited 16th Infantry divisions.

October 1942–July 1943: 1st Bulgarian Army moves to Serbia, leaving the 16th Infantry Division, reinforced by the 68th Infantry Regiment plus units of the 1st and 10th Infantry divisions, to form the (provisional) Belomorski/Aegean Corps (Major-General Trifon Y. Trifonov; HQ: Xanthe). The headquarters of the 7th Infantry Division moves to Thessaloniki, under German command, with its units (the 13th and 41st Infantry regiments, the 1st Army Reserve Regiment, the 12th Divisional Heavy Machine Gun Battalion, the 12th Artillery Regiment, the 7th Depot Regiment and the 12th Engineer Battalion) occupying the area between the Strymon (Struma) and the Axios (Vardar) rivers.

July 1943–October 1944: Under the perceived threat of an Allied invasion of Greece, the newly established Bulgarian II Corps (HQ: Drama), consisting of the 7th, 16th and 28th (mobilized) Infantry divisions, transfers to the Aegean province (where it relieves the Aegean Corps) and remains in position until its disbandment at the end of September 1944 and Bulgaria's withdrawal from Greece in early October 1944.

* Not including paramilitary forces

of 80 *andartes*, Fosteridis ambushed the Bulgarians as they were crossing the Papades bridge. Reportedly, more than 150 Bulgarian soldiers were killed in the ensuing three-day battle.

On 9 September 1944, a bloodless coup conducted by the Communist-dominated 'Fatherland Front' coalition transformed overnight the Bulgarian Army in Greece from an occupation force into an ally. Bulgarian troops evacuated Greece only reluctantly, in late October 1944, after the Soviet Union's 3rd Ukrainian Front had reached the Bulgarian border from the direction of Romania, and only days before the last of the German troops had withdrawn north to avoid becoming cut off in the Balkan Peninsula.

COLLABORATIONIST FORCES

Greece's wartime collaboration phenomenon is sensitive and analytically complex, and it cannot be explored in detail in a work of such modest length. Suffice to say that collaborators acted out of radically different motives: there were those who collaborated out of ideological (i.e. National Socialist) convictions; those who did so out of pure opportunism; and others who were driven by anti-Communism or nationalism (including irredentism). The heterogeneous motivation of Greek collaborators also reflected itself in their unit organization and activities, which ranged from the military, in the case of armed collaborationist formations sanctioned by the Greek puppet government, to the outright criminal, in the case of many of the paramilitary formations. Geographic considerations and distance from the central administration also played a significant role in the set-up, organization and activities of collaborationist formations.

Citing security concerns, the Axis occupiers initially opposed the formation of indigenous armed collaboration units. They had earlier allowed the recruitment and arming of 'Volunteer Gendarmes', grouped into several *Ethelontiki Chorofylaki* (Volunteer Gendarmerie) units, and gradually absorbed by the Gendarmerie. Five battalions (two in Athens and one each in Corinth, Kalamata and Argos) of 19 companies were created, with a total establishment of 1,600 men. These operated under the command of the German *Ordnungspolizei*, with the task of maintaining order and countering subversive elements. Units of the *Astynomia Poleon* (City Police), including the 700-strong Athens-based *Mihanokinito Tmima Astynomias Poleon* (Police Motorized Squadron), also played a prominent collaborationist role.

The first of Greece's dedicated collaborationist military formations saw the light of day in May 1943, when the Germans granted permission to the puppet government of Ioannis Rallis to establish the 1st Evzones Battalion (HQ: Athens). The importance of this unit only became apparent to its German patrons after Italy's surrender to the Allies: faced with a lack of manpower to police occupied Greece against the growing threat of its resistance movement, the Germans came to accept, out of necessity, the creation of home-grown, armed collaborationist forces. The 1st Evzones Battalion was to provide the nucleus for the raising, between September and December 1943, of a further three *Tágmata Asfalías* (security battalions). By the end of the war, a total of nine security battalions had been established, grouped in two regiments, with their headquarters in

A member of the Republican (formerly Royal) Guard, at the iconic Unknown Soldier Monument (Athens Royal Palace) during the occupation. The ceremonial Republican Guard was to serve as the nucleus for the raising, in the latter part of 1943, of the collaborationist 'security battalions', the official armed extension of the Greek puppet government. (Author's Collection)

Athens and Patras, respectively. While formally answerable to the Greek puppet government, the security battalions were armed and trained by the Germans, operating under the overall command of Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS Walter Schimana, the *Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer* for Greece. Their men (pejoratively called *'Germanotsoliades'* or 'German Evzoni') donned the uniforms of the Evzoni (see Plate H1) and swore an oath of allegiance to Adolf Hitler. Their officers wore former regular Greek Army uniforms, with modified Greek national insignia, lacking the Greek Royal Crown.

Initially, the establishment of a security battalion was 300 NCOs and riflemen, led by 20 (ex-regular Greek Army) officers. Security battalions doubled in size as the National Resistance persisted, with German liaison officers attached to them. Security battalion members were recruited from a cross-section of Greek society: while many of them were draftees, it was conservatives, extreme right-wingers, socially marginalized elements and criminals that were over-represented in their ranks. Plans to establish security battalions in Macedonia and other parts of occupied Greece were scrapped, meaning that their main theatres of operation were Athens, the eastern part of central Greece and the Peloponnese. Their core mission, which they continued to perform into the final days of the German occupation, was the fight against guerrilla bands, in support of the German forces, and the enforcement of punitive measures in the context of anti-partisan operations. In performing their mission, their members committed atrocities and numerous criminal acts against civilians.

The security battalions were complemented by some 22 volunteer battalions, spread across Greece, of which the first one, 'Leonidas' (later, 'Laconia'), was formed in Sparta in September 1943. Volunteer battalions were established in Attica, Euboea, Central Greece, the Peloponnese, Crete, the Ionian Sea islands and Macedonia, where they operated under Schimana's overall command. These were variously termed *Freiwillige-Bataillone*, *Freiwillige-Polizei-Bataillone* or *Freiwillige-Polizei-Halb-Bataillone*, and they were typically identified by reference to their respective city/area of operations, e.g. Freiwillige-Polizei-Bataillon 'Saloniki', or by a combination of Latin numerals and place identifiers, e.g. Freiwillige-Bataillon VI (Kozani). According to an August 1944 ELAS GHQ report, the combined forces of armed collaborationist units totalled about 15,000 men, but other sources estimated their number as well over 20,000 men.

A variety of other collaborationist militias operated in the north of Greece (Macedonia, Thrace and Epirus), where the authority of the Greek puppet government was limited. Their distinguishing features were their leader-centric nature, their semi-official status and their greater degree of autonomy compared to the security and volunteer battalions in southern Greece. One of the most prominent of these militias was EES, the brainchild of a certain Kyriakos Papadopoulos. Locally known by his Turkish nickname of 'Kısa Bacak' (i.e. 'Short Leg'), Papadopoulos was a Turkophone Pontic Greek and veteran partisan leader with guerrilla experience against the Turks between 1914 and 1922. After the fall of Greece, Papadopoulos established a militia, which he armed with weapons recovered from the crumbling Greek Army.

Politically conservative and anti-Communist, Papadopoulos rejected ELAS's repeated invitations to join their ranks. Frustrated in their attempts to win him over, ELAS declared war against his band in the spring of 1943. Augmented by former members of other Resistance bands, which ELAS had dispersed – including EKKA and YBE/PAO – his militia of civilian village guards was gradually driven into the arms of the Germans who, in exchange for weapons and support, used EES men as auxiliaries in their fight against Communist resistance. As EES commander-in-chief, Papadopoulos moved his headquarters from the village of Koukos (Pieria) to Thessaloniki in August 1944, from where he directed his militia's operations until his death, on 4 November 1944, in the battle of Kilkis, in which ELAS definitively vanquished what remained of the anti-Communist collaborationist militias of northern Greece.

THE RECKONING

Measured in terms of the number of Axis troop losses it inflicted and the tying down of enemy troops it entailed, Greece's World War II partisan movement was a success, especially considering the relatively limited Allied investment in human capital and *matériel* in support of the Greek resistance. At the peak of its strength, in late 1944, the Allied Military Mission fielded no more than 400 men.

Starting with the enemy casualty metric, the consensus is that guerrilla action exacted a toll of up to 15,000 killed, 8,000 wounded and between 3,000 and 5,000 prisoners for all the occupation forces put together (without counting those – mostly Italian troops – who surrendered voluntarily to the *andartes*). Thus, for every seven German troops that served in Greece, one had become a casualty by the time of the end of the occupation (the ratio was lower for Germany's Italian and Bulgarian allies). No reliable figures are available on the casualties suffered by the *andartes*, but it is fair to assume that these were comparable, both

ABOVE LEFT
This photograph shows the so-called 'Cage', an exposed goods carriage loaded with civilian hostages, which the Germans routinely attached to supply or troop-transport trains, to reduce the risk of guerrilla attacks against them. It is not clear how effective this cruel practice was, as trains were often attacked and railway lines and tunnels regularly blasted or sabotaged by the *andartes*, with the active encouragement of the Allied Military Mission and the material and technical support of British and, later in the war, also US demolition specialists. (Athens War Museum)

ABOVE RIGHT
Studio photograph of a group of youthful *andartes* from ELAS's 9th Regiment (Kalamata, Messinia), taken in September 1944, shortly before Greece's liberation. Three of them wear dark-coloured berets, as was typical for ELAS members operating on the Peloponnese. (Iason Chandrinos Collection)

***Andartes* and *andartisses* assigned to the Command Company of ELAS's II Division (Attica-Boeotia) pose for the camera at Aspropyrgos, in the outskirts of Athens, shortly after Greece's liberation (October 1944). The German occupation of Greece ended on 12 October 1944, while the occupation of the city of Athens itself lasted 1,264 days. (Iason Chandrinos Collection)**

in absolute terms and as a ratio, to those of the occupation armies. What is noteworthy in the above estimates is the great preponderance of dead to wounded, testifying to the ferocity of guerrilla warfare in Greece, and to the 'no prisoners' policy pursued by all sides. That said, casualties among Greece's civilian population dwarfed those suffered by the resistance and occupation forces alike between May 1941 and October 1944: an estimated 500,000 civilians had perished by the end of the occupation, of whom about 270,000 died of famine, a staggering 70,000 became victims of reprisals and nearly 50,000, mostly Greek Jews, were deported and exterminated in the German death camps. In terms of the share of its pre-war population that became a fatality during World War II, Greece was only surpassed by Poland, the Soviet Union and Germany.

Turning to the tie-down metric, the existence of a vigorous guerrilla movement in the mountains of Greece was to prove highly disruptive to the German war effort, especially around the time of the preparation and conduct of the Allied landings in Sicily. At the height of World War II, no fewer than 27 Axis divisions were tied down in Greece. The intensification of partisan warfare, as of early 1943, necessitated the involvement of at least two front-line German divisions, which, if available for service in Italy, would, as minimum, have decelerated the pace of the Allies' march to Rome, rendering it more costly in Allied personnel and *matériel*.

Where Greek resistance scored even higher was in terms of its value at interdicting enemy lines of communication. The sabotage operation against the Gorgopotamos River railway bridge cut off the flow of supplies to the Deutsches Afrikakorps for nearly six weeks (39 days), helping to tip the scales of the war in North Africa in the Allies' favour. Similarly, the occupation forces' constant struggle to keep open the few west–east and north–south communications axes in mainland Greece caused them considerable attrition, reinforced their insecurity, and solidified their conviction that, at least in that small corner of Europe, they were, in equal measure, despised and unwanted by the great majority of the population.

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PLATE COMMENTARIES

A: RESISTANCE LEADERS

A1: Protokapetánios Aris Velouchiòtis, ELAS GHQ, Lamia, October 1944

Except for his fur *kalpak* and British Army leather jerkin, Arch-Captain Velouchiòtis, aged 39 in 1944, is portrayed here wearing the khaki wool uniform of a pre-war regular Greek Army officer, stripped of rank insignia or branch identifiers. His breeches are tucked into black leather cavalry boots – Velouchiòtis and his retinue of bodyguards travelled by horse, with cavalry accoutrements being an indispensable part of their attire – while the decorative dagger hanging from his waist belt is reminiscent of that of military academy cadets.

A2: Antistrátigos Stéfanos Saráfis, Caserta, Naples, September 1944

ELAS's overall military commander is shown here in the service uniform of a lieutenant-general, which he donned at the time of the negotiations that led to the signing of the Caserta Agreement. His uniform is, essentially, that of a pre-war regular Greek Army general officer except for a six-pointed, oversize silver-thread-embroidered star on each of his tunic's shoulder straps; these were a rank distinction unique to Saráfis, whose pre-war Greek Army rank was that of an infantry colonel. His collar insignia, in the form of a gold-thread-embroidered oak leaf set against a red tab, is that worn to this day by regular Greek Army general officers. His forage cap, which sports an embroidered white-and-blue stylized flaming grenade, with the letters 'ELAS' at its base, was on display, at the time of publication, at the Athens War Museum.

A3: Syntagmatàrchis Napoleon Zervas, Derviziani, November 1942

The overall military commander of EDES wears a pre-war regular Greek Army uniform, stripped of rank insignia or branch identifiers. The buttons that fasten his tunic are not the standard-issue, convex-shaped, gold-coloured metal buttons bearing the Greek coat of arms but instead plain plastic, brown-coloured substitutes, in a show of defiance to the Monarchy, which Colonel Zervas had originally opposed as guerrilla leader (but was to later embrace, for reasons of political convenience). His Sam Browne belt and leather pistol holster were also standard issue for Greek Army officers of the period.

B: RESISTANCE FORCES (1)

B1: *Dioikitìs tagmatos*, ELAS, Amfissa, June 1944

This smartly dressed senior ELAS officer is depicted in the late stages of the National Resistance. His outfit is reminiscent, in its cut, of the service uniform worn by Greek Army officers until Greece's capitulation to the Axis. It would have been made of British-supplied cloth, as former Greek Army uniform stocks had been largely depleted by this stage of World War II. He wears leather riding boots and a Sam Browne belt for his service weapon (most likely, a British-supplied revolver), items indicative of his officer status. His

rank of battalion commander is denoted by the single, six-pointed, gold-coloured metal star pinned on each of his tunic's epaulettes, and on the right-hand side of his British Army-inspired forage cap.

B2: *Mavroskoufis*, ELAS, Viniani, October 1943

Formed in April 1943, the *Mavroskoufides* ('Black Hoods'), named after their characteristic black fur *kalpaks*, were a mounted squadron of about 50 hand-picked men, some of them former bandits and outlaws, who served as the personal guards of Aris Velouchiòtis. The forbidding-looking *Mavroskoufis* portrayed here carries a plentiful supply of ammunition in leather cartridge belts, as well as a decorated waist knife, reminiscent of those carried at the time of the Greek War of Independence.

B3: *Andartissa*, 34th Parnassus Regiment, ELAS, Dervenochoria, October 1943

This artwork depicts a female partisan as she would have appeared in late 1943, in the mountains of central Greece. She is armed with a 7.92mm Kar 98k rifle, taken from a dead German soldier. By this stage of the war, British supplies had begun to give ELAS guerrillas a more uniform, military appearance, with the *andartissa* portrayed here turned out in British Army-supplied battledress, a British Army service coat and leather laced ankle boots.

Stéfanos Saráfis, military commander of ELAS, poses next to its *protokapetánios*, Aris Velouchiòtis. Their close cooperation helped to propel ELAS to the front rank of Greece's wartime resistance movement. During the early stages of the Greek Civil War, Velouchiòtis was ambushed and died in the Agrafa Mountains on 15 June 1945, with the circumstances of his death remaining the subject of controversy to this day. Saráfis survived World War II and the Greek Civil War, went into politics and died in a collision with a car in a suburb of Athens, on 31 May 1957. Standing between the two men is one of the bodyguards of Velouchiòtis (see Plate B2), possibly Leon Tzavellas, the *nom de guerre* of Ioannis Aggeletos. (Athens War Museum)

C: RESISTANCE FORCES (2)

C1: *Dioikitìs tagmatos*, Athens Division, ELAS, October 1944

This ELAS battalion commander is from the Asia Minor refugee-dominated neighbourhoods of east Athens, underneath Mount Ymittos. He is turned out in a mix of locally made and 'liberated' uniform items, including former Greek Army or locally made legwear; German jackboots; a German open-collared tropical tunic, complete with its distinctive stipple-pattern buttons; and a Greek Army-style forage cap. His rank is denoted by the single, six-pointed, gold-thread-embroidered star stitched to his tunic's epaulettes. He is armed with a .32 FN/Browning 1900 semi-automatic pistol and has a binocular case (not visible here) slung around his back.

C2: *Aetópoulo*, ELAS, Paramythia, April 1944

Based on a characteristic period photograph, this child partisan is depicted as he would have appeared in the closing stages of the Greek resistance. He is turned out in British-supplied battledress, adjusted to his diminutive proportions, and is armed with a 6.5mm Mannlicher-Carcano M1891 cavalry carbine, well suited, due to its light weight, to the capabilities of child soldiers. He carries a plentiful supply of ammunition in locally sourced leather bandoliers and belts, and his headdress is a forage cap devoid of insignia; some ELAS guerrillas wore homemade metal or cloth badges on their headgear. Children aged 9–14 were eligible for service in the ranks of ELAS, as so-called *Aétopoula* ('Eagle-chicks'), and many of them volunteered for service, especially as of 1944, as ELAS expanded.

C3: *Andartis*, 24th Regiment, EDES, Splantza, October 1943

This typical EDES partisan is depicted as he would have appeared in Epirus, the EDES stronghold. Except for his characteristic former regular Greek Army forage cap, his double-pin leather waist belt and his puttees, most of his other uniform items are British-supplied, down to his double-breasted British Army cold-weather officers' overcoat (so-called 'Officers' Warm'). He is armed with a holstered revolver, and with a venerable Gras Mle 1874 bolt-action artillery musketoon, of regular Greek Army pedigree, with spare ammunition carried in crossed leather bandoliers.

D: RESISTANCE FORCES (3)

D1: SOE liaison officer, Roumeli, May 1943

A BLO, as he would have appeared in the mountains of central Greece in 1943, after the successful Gorgopotamos River railway bridge sabotage operation had been transformed into an ongoing mission to help organize and steer resistance against the Axis occupiers. He is turned out in a 'Battledress, Serge' uniform (often referred to as '1937 Pattern'), consisting of a bloused tunic featuring a five-button fly front, pleated pockets with concealed buttons and an unlined collar; matching trousers featuring a large map-pocket on the front of the left leg with a concealed button and a small, single pleat dressing pocket on the front of the right hip; and canvas anklets. He also sports a waistcoat-style, collarless, sleeveless and pocketless tan leather single-breasted jerkin, fastened with four plastic buttons. The jerkin is lined in khaki 'Battledress' serge material, for added

protection against the cold. He is armed with a service revolver, slung from a canvas belt.

D2: *Dioikitis tagmatos*, 40th Regiment, EDES, Derviziani, April 1943

Period photographs show EDES commanders turned out in a combination of uniform items of Greek, British and Axis origin. This battalion commander is closely based on a period photograph of Gheorghios Agoros (see page 17). He wears an *Evzoni*-type low fez, with the hand-embroidered Greek letters 'EΔES' and 'EOE' (for 'Greek National Bands') on his forage cap, with a stylized Greek cross framed within the letter 'O'; a battledress blouse; pre-war regular Greek Army breeches; and cleated jackboots. He is armed with a holstered revolver, slung from his hip, for which he carries ammunition both in a waist belt and in a locally made leather bandolier, and a 6.5mm Mannlicher-Schönauer M1903/14 rifle, from former regular Greek Army stocks. The majority of EDES commanders were former regular Greek Army officers, some with pro- and others with anti-Monarchist political leanings, but with a common language traceable to their formal military training, which, at least in the earlier stages of the National Resistance, gave EDES units a certain tactical superiority over rival guerrilla bands.

D3: *Andartis*, 2nd Regiment, ELAS, Thebes, November 1944

An ELAS guerrilla, as he would have appeared in Roumeli, around the closing stages of the Axis occupation. His headdress is a modified Greek Army-issue forage cap, with no visible affiliation badges, his personal weapon is a British-supplied Thompson M1928 blowback SMG (a prized possession in the mountains of Greece), and the object he is holding on to in his left hand is a make-shift water-canteen, carved out of a pumpkin, an example of which is on display at the Helioupolis National Resistance Museum (Athens).

E: AXIS OCCUPATION FORCES (1)

E1: *Küstenjäger*, Küstenjäger-Abteilung 'Brandenburg', Rhodes, July 1943

The coastal raider shown here – soon to go into action against the British and the Italians in Leros – is turned out in warm-weather garb, consisting of shorts, a single-breasted, open-collar M40 *Feldbluse*, an M43 *Einheitsfeldmütze* and short tropical boots. The *Feldbluse*, which was worn over a lightweight cotton service shirt, fastens with five stipple-pattern buttons, and features sewn double *Litzen* collar patches, the *Heeresadler* on the right breast, detachable tropical-pattern shoulder straps with *Waffenfarbe* piping, pleated breast pockets with squared button flaps, bellows skirt pockets with squared button flaps, concealed button cuffs, a rear vent and two belt hooks fitted to the rear waistband. The veteran *Brandenburgers* were to prove their mettle in the autumn of 1943 when, despite their numerical disadvantage, they prevailed against the reticent Italian garrisons of the Dodecanese islands and their British allies, in successful amphibious operations in Kos (Operation *Eisbär*) and Leros (Operation *Leopard*).

E2: *Gefreiter*, Jäger-Regiment 724, Agrinio, June 1943

The 104. Jäger-Division was posted to western Greece in June 1943, and remained there until its withdrawal to Yugoslavia, where it fought against Tito's Partisans. The corporal portrayed here wears a standard-issue M43 *Feldbluse*: on the upper right sleeve is the *Jäger* badge, also worn on the *Einheitsfeldmütze*, in the form of a white-metal pin. His tapered M43 trousers are tucked into his cleated *Bergschuhe* (mountaineering boots). He carries a Tellermine 42 anti-tank mine, with an explosive charge of 5.5kg of Amatol. Although these were not suitable as anti-personnel weapons (their activation required the application of a weight of at least 210kg), they could, if strung together and detonated remotely, be used as demolition charges, to blow up fortified positions, tree-trunks and smaller bridges, helping to interdict the *andartes'* escape routes and to flush them out of their dugouts during anti-partisan operations.

Four identified ELAS *andartes* (from left to right, Louis Kohen, Gheorgios Katsigiannis, Nikos Dimitriou and David Brudo), all members of the 2nd Parnassus Regiment, triumphantly enter the town of Thiva in October 1944, shortly after the German withdrawal. (© Photographic Archive – Jewish Museum of Greece)

E3: *SS-Sturmmann*, SS-Polizei-Panzergrenadier-Regiment 7, Larissa, June 1944

Waffen-SS units active in south-eastern Europe (but also in Ukraine and the Caucasus) were turned out in tropical uniforms, often modelled after Italian uniform items. The *SS-Sturmmann* shown here wears a lightweight, Italian-style *Sahariana* shirt with a tropical M43 *Einheitsfeldmütze*. His Luftwaffe-inspired baggy trousers, bloused over half-canvas/half-leather lace-up boots, were also worn by Heer and Waffen-SS units operating in the warmer climates of south-eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. The *SS-Sturmmann* is only recognizable as a member of the Waffen-SS by the *Totenkopf* (death's head) skull-and-bones symbol on his peaked cap and by the conspicuous absence of the *Wehrmachtsadler* eagle-shaped national emblem over the right breast pocket. On 5 April 1944, members of SS-Polizei-Panzergrenadier-Regiment 7 murdered some 270 of the inhabitants of the village of Klisoura (western Macedonia) in reprisals for the death of two of their comrades in the hands of the *andartes*.

F: AXIS OCCUPATION FORCES (2)

F1: *Caporale*, 13º Reggimento di fanteria 'Pinerolo', Kastoria, November 1942

A corporal in the typical grey-green uniform of Italy's army, as he would have appeared on any of the Continental fronts on which Italy fought until its surrender in September 1943. He wears the M40 single-breasted grey-green *giubba*, featuring an integral belt, and matching trousers, and has standard-issue grey-green leather webbing, from which a frogged knife-bayonet is suspended. His headgear is the M33/34 nickel-steel helmet, varnished in dull grey-green, and his weapon is the 6.5mm Mannlicher-Carcano M1891 rifle – one of the most outdated standard-issue rifles fielded by any of the armed forces that participated in World War II.

F2: *SS-Unterscharführer*, SS-Pionier-Bataillon 4, Kozani, July 1944

The 4. SS-Polizei-Panzergrenadier-Division, the home formation of this soldier, transferred to Greece from France, where it was rebuilt in early 1943, following its involvement in heavy combat action on the Eastern Front. While in Greece, it was involved in intense anti-partisan action, mostly against ELAS units. The NCO depicted here wears an Italian-style *Sahariana* jacket over a lightweight shirt, and matching baggy tropical trousers. He is protected against the Greek sun by a second-pattern (i.e. felt as opposed to canvas-covered) *Tropenhelm* (pith helmet), which was issued, in limited numbers, for non-front-line use, to SS personnel stationed in North Africa, Italy, Greece and the Caucasus, mostly without insignia. His rank is indicated on his collar tabs, with the right-side tab bearing dual, machine-embroidered runes and the left-side tab featuring a single silvered pip, and on his shoulder straps, trimmed with branch-colour piping and bordered by wire tresses. Stitched onto his upper left sleeve is a Waffen-SS-style eagle and onto his lower left arm a cuff title consisting of a black rayon base, trimmed along both edges with silver aluminium wire tresses, and bearing the machine-embroidered inscription of 'SS-POLIZEI-DIVISION'. His decorations include the *Eisernes Kreuz 2. Klasse* (Iron Cross Second Class), the *Nahkampfspange in Bronze* (Close Combat Clasp in Bronze) and the *Verwundetenabzeichen in Schwarz* (Wound Badge in Black). He is armed with a holstered Walther P 38 pistol, the standard sidearm for officers, NCOs and machine-gun crews serving with the Heer, the Luftwaffe, the Kriegsmarine and the Waffen-SS.

Four German servicemen (including two ranking as *Gefreiter* and one *Obergefreiter*) pose for the camera before the Royal Palace in Athens (the present-day Parliament Building). Three of them are wearing standard Luftwaffe service and walking-out uniforms. The 'odd man out' (standing second from the left) wears what looks like a standard Luftwaffe tropical uniform, and what appear to be *Fallschirmjäger* (paratroopers) front-laced jump boots; his belt buckle is unmistakably that of the Luftwaffe, but his rank is impossible to identify in this photograph (on tropical uniforms, this was solely displayed on the shoulder straps, which are not visible here). (Author's Collection)

F3: *Carabiniere*, VI Battaglione Carabinieri Reali, Messolonghi, March 1943

The Carabinieri Reali, Italy's Gendarmerie-type militarized police force, supported the Regio Esercito in its occupation and security tasks, with units of Carabinieri attached to most of the Army's major occupation formations throughout Greece during 1941–43. The *Carabiniere* portrayed here wears the characteristic *Carabinieri lucerne* (tricorne), with a *grigio-verde* (grey-green) cover, adorned with an embroidered stylized flaming grenade bearing the letters 'VE' (for Vittorio Emmanuelle, the King of Italy), but without the full-dress, red-over-blue plume; an M40 single-breasted grey-green *giubba* (tunic) – four-button light beige *Sahariana* summer tunics were worn, instead, during the warmer months – complete with the silver-coloured laced *Carabinieri mostrine* (insignia), featuring the Italian armed forces' five-pointed star; and grey-green pantaloons. His brown leather bandolier (at the lower end of which a pistol holster is suspended), which was standard issue for Italian mounted and armoured troops during World War II, was also worn by the *Carabinieri*. His main weapon is the ubiquitous Mannlicher-Carcano M1891 cavalry carbine.

G: BULGARIAN OCCUPATION FORCES

G1: *Podpolkovnik*, 7th Infantry Division, Thessaloniki, March 1943

Following the Bulgarian Army's reorganization in 1936, the design of the uniforms worn by its men underwent considerable changes, with officers' uniforms borrowing German Army uniform-inspired elements. Differences remained, however, in terms of colour (which fluctuated between olive drab and khaki), the tunics' shoulder boards (which remained styled after those of the Imperial Russian Army), and the three-pointed shape of the tunic's breast and side pocket flaps (styled after those of the Austro-Hungarian Army, with deeply scalloped pocket flaps that formed long points at their ends). The single-breasted tunic's stand-and-fall collars featured German-style double *Litzen* for ranks below that of general, and the service-dress breeches and riding boots of Bulgarian Army officers were very similar to those worn by their German Army counterparts. The lieutenant-colonel portrayed here wears the winter version of the 1936-pattern service uniform, made of heavy wool, and carries a map case (concealing his holstered service pistol, suspended over the right hip from his Sam Browne-style

belt). His headdress is similar in style to the contemporary Italian *bustina* forage cap and features a metal shield with the Bulgarian tricolour on its right-hand side, and a crowned lion rampant badge on its front.

G2: *Rednik*, 16th Infantry Division, Xanthi, October 1942

The 1936 reforms did not leave rank-and-file Bulgarian Army uniforms unaffected, even if their impact was less radical than in the case of officers' uniforms. The reservist private portrayed here is turned out in the standard 'tobacco brown' woollen winter service uniform, with red (infantry) collar patches and matching (pre-war) shoulder straps. He also wears the M1936 steel helmet (distinguishable from the M1938 helmet by its characteristic frontal crest), and standard-issue infantry leather equipment. He is armed with an 8mm Steyr-Mannlicher M1895/1934 rifle, in service in the Bulgarian Army from 1935. Instead of the more common jackboots, he wears ankle boots with the tapered ends of his woollen trousers constrained by canvas gaiters, secured in place by two buttons.

G3: *Polkovnik*, 11th Infantry Division, Komotini (Gjumjurdschina), June 1941

Bulgaria owed its independence from Ottoman rule to the intervention by Imperial Russia, which was also the source of the original (and, in some respects, the most lasting) influence on the uniforms of its troops. The Imperial Russian Army pedigree of this colonel's uniform is unmistakable, evinced by his *furashka*-like peaked cap, the oval-shaped national cockade, and the Imperial Russian Army-inspired shoulder boards. His staff-officer status is denoted by his braided aiguillettes and the wide red stripe along the seams of his breeches. His *mundir* (tunic) is the lighter-weight summer variant, in olive-drab wool; white cotton or linen variants of the tunic were also in use during the summer months, and these featured a high standing collar and standard shoulder boards.

H: COLLABORATIONIST FORCES

H1: *Evzon*, 2nd Security Regiment, Patras, May 1944

Rank and file serving with the state-sanctioned security battalions were turned out in the *Evzoni* version of the pre-war beige summer service uniform (although, in period photographs, they present a somewhat dejected and less 'military' appearance compared to their precursors). The *Evzoni* service uniform consisted of a traditional, zouave-style low fez (devoid of the long black tassel typical of pre-war *Evzoni* service dress), a frock-type *doulama* (tunic), gartered woollen stockings and mountaineers' hobnailed *tsarouhia* (shoes). The black woollen pompoms featuring on his shoes were normally removed when in the field (although occupation-period *Evzoni* appear to have worn them regularly). The *Evzon* portrayed here is armed with a Mannlicher-Schönauer M1903/14 rifle, from former regular Greek Army stocks; his equipment is that of the pre-war regular Greek Army, and his fez displays no national cockade.

H2: *Ypostràtigos*, 1st Security Regiment, Athens, September 1943

Security battalion officers were mostly former regular Greek Army officers re-activated to command the state-sanctioned security battalions. Unsurprisingly, officers serving with those units were turned out in M1938 uniforms (here, the No. 4 Service Dress uniform worn by a major-general) as worn by regular Greek Army officers until the outbreak of World War II. This consisted of a 'French-style' officers' tunic, matching breeches, brown leather riding boots and a British Army-style peaked cap with a leather visor. The occupation-period 'Greek State' was a peculiar type of anti-Monarchist republic, subservient to its Axis masters. As a result, the one material respect in which the uniforms worn by the security battalion officers differed from those of the pre-war regular Greek Army was the absence of the Greek Royal Crown from the embroidered white-and-blue round-shaped national cockade that adorned their peaked caps, as well as from the shoulder straps of higher-ranking officers.

Two grim-looking EDES guerrillas pose for the camera, somewhere in the mountains of Greece, during the National Resistance. They both wear battledress, as was commonplace for the members of many Allied-supported guerrilla bands in Greece from 1943 onwards. The man on the left wears the US-manufactured War Aid battledress, while the man on the right wears the original Serge (or Pattern 1937) version. The medal ribbon visible above each left breast pocket of the blouse cannot be identified. (Athens War Museum)

H3: Militiaman, *Lòchos Asfaleias*, EES, Kozani, March 1944

EES militiamen were, essentially, armed village guards, whose task was to protect their area of responsibility from ELAS bands' incursions. They were, therefore, dressed in civilian garb, apart from the occasional identifying badge. The militiaman depicted here is based on a period photograph; he wears a makeshift white cloth armband, featuring a rendition of the Swastika, next to a stylized version of the Greek flag and what looks like the Latin letter 'V'. He is armed with a Mannlicher-Schönauer M1903/14 rifle, and also carries a Czech 7.92mm ZB-26 light machine gun, supplied by the Germans.

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my maternal grandparents, Eleni and Efstathios, who survived Greece's triple occupation, and to all those who did not.

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Author's note

In the absence of any commonly accepted and widely used transliteration rules for the rendition of Greek characters and diphthongs into Latin script, the transliteration approach opted for in the text is the one corresponding best to the phonetics of the relevant Greek characters and diphthongs.

Artist's note

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Title-page photograph: A group of ELAS guerrillas pose for the camera in Livadeia with an assortment of semi-automatic weapons, including two British Sten Mk II (first and third from the left), a German MP 35/I (second from the left) and a Soviet PPSh-41 (first from the right). (Iason Chandrinos Collection)

Abbreviations used in the text

AAA: Agon-Anorthosis-Apeleftherosis (Rebirth and Liberation Struggle)
EAM: Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo (National Liberation Front)
EAO: Ethnikes Antartikes Omades (National Guerrilla Bands)
EDES: Ethnikos Dimokratikos Ellinikos Syndesmos (National Republican Greek League)
EES: Ethnikos Ellinikos Stratos (National Greek Army)
EKKA: Ethniki kai Koinoniki Apeleftherosis (National and Social Liberation)
ELAN: Elliniko Laiko Apeleftherotiko Naftiko (Hellenic Popular Liberation Navy)
ELAS: Ethnikos Laikos Apeleftherotikos Stratos (National Popular Liberation Army)
EOEA: Ethinikes Omades Ellinon Antarton (National Bands of Greek Guerrillas)
EPON: Eniaia Panelladiki Organosi Neon (United Panhellenic Youth Organization)
KKE: Kommounistiko Komma Ellados (Communist Party of Greece)
PAO: Panellinios Apeleftherotiki Organosis (Panhellenic Liberation Organization)
PEEA: Politiki Epitropi Ethnikis Apeleftherosis (Political Committee for National Liberation)
YBE: Yperaspistes Boreiou Ellados (Defenders of Northern Greece)